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Aug. 10.

Leisure Hours.

BY

JOHN HICKLIN.

NOTTINGHAM:

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1826.



TO
HIS GRACE

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The DUKE of NEWCASTLE, K.G.

LORD LIEUTENANT

OF

THE COUNTY OF NOTTINGHAM,

THE FOLLOWING PAGES

ARE

(BY HIS GRACE'S PERMISSION)

MOST RESPECTFULLY

Inscribed,

BY

HIS GRACE'S OBLIGED AND HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.



PREFACE.



“ NEVER in the annals of pen, ink, and paper,” says an amusing writer in the *Literary Magnet*, “ was there known such an awful period for a young literary *debutante* ! He is surrounded by a countless multitude, possessing talent and pretensions equal with his own, while he is preceded by another countless multitude, possessing talent and pretensions far greater. Like a youthful knight of old, tilting in the *melée*—if he is victor, his conquest is hidden by the crowd : if he falls, that crowd tramples him to death.”

At a time, then, like the present, when the press teems with the most able works upon every subject, it perhaps may create some little surprise, that one engaged, as the author is, in commercial pursuits, should intrude himself upon the notice of the literary world.

He is well aware, that any thing which he can offer in justification of his undertaking, or in mitigation of the severity of criticism, will avail but little to secure for his work a favourable reception : by its own merits it must stand or fall.

Thus much he may, perhaps, be allowed to observe : that several of the pieces contained

in this, his maiden production, were written at an early age; and the whole of them have been composed during those leisure hours, which a relaxation from his daily avocations afforded.

His primary objects, in thus employing his leisure, were his own amusement, and the desire of contributing to the pleasure of his friends: at the solicitation of those friends (hacknied as the apology is), this little work is now, with the utmost deference, presented to a candid and discerning public.

To those generous patrons, who have kindly fostered his undertaking, the author

returns his grateful acknowledgments; and should his effort be so fortunate as to receive the approbation of the wise and good—should he be the means of administering, in the slightest degree, to the gratification or instruction of a single individual, he will have the satisfaction of reflecting, that he has not wholly mispent his **LEISURE HOURS**.

Nottingham, June, 1826.

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THOUGHTS
ON
DEATH AND JUDGMENT.

" One eye on death, and one full fix'd on heaven,
" Becomes a mortal." *Young.*

SPIRIT of Song ! come, sit upon my lyre,
And guide my yet unpractis'd hands to strike
In strains of harmony, the trembling chord.
And thou, Almighty Spirit, Paraclete !
Who, on the day of Pentecost, didst shed
Thy hallowing graces on the Apostles' hearts,
Thou, by whose fire baptiz'd, the Prophets spake,
Exalt my thoughts to everlasting themes.
Bright Sun of Inspiration ! chase the gloom
Of intellectual darkness ; O diffuse
Thy beams of glory to direct my steps,
And lead the way to Wisdom's holy fane ;

That when Death's ruthless hand shall dash to dust
 My harp, my soul may join th' angelic choirs,
 To chant such strains as Seraphs love to sing.

When at the mandate of that potent voice,
 Which call'd this Earth, and all the hosts of light
 From primitive confusion ; Man arose,
 In God's similitude, supremely good :
 The crown of holiness, th' unsullied wreath
 Of spotless innocence adorn'd his brow ;
 The Lord his guardian, Cherubim his friends,
 Peace, love, and honour grac'd his happy home ;
 He drank the waters of celestial bliss,
 And pluck'd the fruit of immortality.
 But ah ! this state of purity and joy
 Fled, like an evanescent morning cloud ;
 Was transient, as the sparkling drops of dew.
 Lur'd by the wiles of Hell's apostate prince,
 (Whose highest joy is Man's eternal woe)
 From his primeval glory, Adam fell ;
 Shame, sorrow, desolation spread their sway,
 And sin's lethiferous poison chill'd his soul :
 Of misery prolific parent, Sin,
 Source of destruction, harbinger of death !

Well might Creation tremble ; well might shouts
 Of exultation shake th' infernal realms ;
 When boasting Satan told, how he seduc'd
 The new-formed pair from virtue's paths, to walk
 In the crook'd ways of sin and disobedience. *

Sin enter'd in the world—the lightnings blaz'd—
 The judgment thunders roll'd—and justice pass'd
 The doom of death on Man's rebellious race.
 That doom is universal—all have sinn'd,
 All, all must bow to thy despotic power,
 Inexorable monarch, lord of fate !
 No mortal hand can shake the solid base
 Of thy dominion ; earthly empires fall ;
 Thrones sink to dust, and princeloms pass away :
 But thy vast reign defies the wildest storms

* “ Earth trembled from her entrails, as again
 “ In pangs, and Nature gave a second groan ;
 “ Sky lower'd, and muttering thunder, some sad drops
 “ Wept at completing of the mortal sin
 “ Original.” *Milton's Paradise Lost.—Book 9.*

“ The Stygian throng
 “ Bent their aspect, and whom they wish'd, beheld
 “ Their mighty chief return'd ; loud was th' acclaim ;
 “ Forth rush'd in haste the great consulting peers,
 “ Rais'd from the dark divan, and with like joy
 “ Congratulant approach'd him.”
Paradise Lost — Book 10.

Of mutability—invincible !

Aye thou wilt hold thy unrejoicing court,
Where horror spreads its melancholy gloom,
Till Time's swift chariot wheels shall cease to roll,
And dread Eternity asserts her sway.

Each hour proclaims thy conquests, ghastly king !
Stern desolater, thy remorseless arm
Is ever rais'd to launch thy fatal shafts,
To populate thy drear domain, the grave.
The grave—that home of silence, seat of rest ;
There the loud dissonance of riot's shouts
Is hush'd for ever : there contentions cease :
There the tir'd pilgrim, on whose hoary head,
Adversity's rude blasts have wreak'd their rage,
Forgets his toils, and sinks into repose ;
There penury's chill gripe is felt no more ;
There tyranny resigns his iron rod ;
Grim-visag'd warriors drop the gory lance ;
Pride bows his crest, and humbled grandeur stoops.

All, all on earth is fleeting as a shadow,
Inconstant as the ocean's eddying waves ;
Has not Jehováh bade his Prophet cry,

All flesh is grass, and like the summer-flower,
 Which spreads its blooming beauties to the morn,
 But fades and droops, ere evening shrouds the skies,
 Man's short-liv'd glory withers and expires? *
 Where is the city, through whose splendid walls,
 The proud Euphrates roll'd its stately streams?
 (Those streams where Judah's captive tribes bewail'd
 Their country's desolation, and their woes :)
 Once glorious Babylon, whose mighty towers
 Defy'd the storms of fate, and blasts of time,
 How is thy pomp abas'd, thy glory fled !
 Th' exterminating Angel there has rear'd
 His dark pavilion ; awful stillness reigns :
 Save when at intervals the bittern's shriek,
 The dragon's cry, or lion's midnight roar,
 Is faintly echoed by those shatter'd piles,
 Which oft have rung with clamorous bursts of joy.
 Where the gay mart of nations, wealthy Tyre ?
 No longer cloth'd with robes of royal might,
 She sits majestic, " of cities queen,"
 While at the footstool of her princely throne,
 Contending kingdoms pour their costly wares ;

* Isaiah, xl. v. 6.

But o'er the cheerless waste in gloomy garb,
 Her spectre frowns—Phœnicia's pride no more.
 Paus'd here gaunt desolation in his course,
 As sated with destruction ? witness Rome,
 Imperial city—witness fallen Greece ;
 And thou, too, Salem, by whose sacred walls,
 Th' Omniscient Saviour dropt compassion's tear,
 As piercing through the veil of future years,
 His prescient eye foresaw thy coming doom.
 O'er many a joyous realm, where plenty smil'd,
 And grandeur rais'd aloft its glittering spires,
 Th' Omnipotent, in righteous wrath, has stretch'd
 “ Confusion's line, the stones of emptiness.” *

On voiceless wastes, where moss-clad columns rear
 Their dusky pillars, vestiges to tell
 Of former greatness, musing pilgrims oft
 At that calm hour, when meditation lights
 Her holy lamp, and silence reigns around,
 Aghast hear falling o'er the desert heath,
 Decaying battlements with hideous crash,
 Thundering aloud, the hollow voice of time,
 The knell of glory, and the dirge of pomp—

* Isaiah, xxxiv. v. 11.

So perishable all terrestrial might !
 The towering monuments of human pride,
 Whose splendour seem'd coeval with the Sun,
 Sink 'neath the spoiler's hand, as sinks the mound
 Of sliding sand before the raging tide ;
 While on their ruins, devastation thron'd
 In sullen triumph, waves his banner high,
 Stamps vanity on all beneath the Moon,
 And in the wreck of nations, fall of states,
 Recites a lecture, audible by all,
 (Would man but listen) on mortality.

These are the trophies which destroying time
 Strews o'er his march exultant ; feeble types
 Of that last conquest, when this spacious globe,
 With yon bright orbs of living fire, which roll
 Their golden cars through heaven's bespangled vault,
 Shall hear Destruction's voice, and disappear
 In one tremendous, desolating blaze.

O, 'tis an awful, yet a wise employ,
 To commune with the grave ; for tombs can teach !
 Methinks the slumbering dead can find a voice,
 To chide the sons of folly. Why such toil,

Children of Adam, why such care and strife,
To grasp at emptiness, to clasp a shade?

Many, whose graves the heedless foot now treads,
A few short years ago, were labouring hard
Up Glory's steep ascent; their toiling steps
Had well nigh reach'd Ambition's dizzy height;
They heard, or thought they heard, the echoing blast
Of trumpet-tongued renown proclaim their deeds
To plausible thousands. Sudden as the burst
Of tempest's rage, death launch'd his rapid bolt,
And dull oblivion sits upon their tombs.
"Vain pomp and glory of the world," what are ye?
And what your boasted joys? Forgotten dreams,
Illusive phantoms, air-blown bubbles, sparks
That glitter for a moment—then expire.
As well might mortal arm essay to rear
A stable fabric, on the whirling surge
Of Ocean's billows; as attempt to raise
The dome of lasting pleasure, on the waves
Of Time's impetuous stream.

Though man ascend
The gilded chariot of imperial power;

Though cloth'd with majesty, and clad in pomp,
 Riches and honours wait upon his nod ;
 Though, like Samaria's monarch in the fight, *
 He buckle on Precaution's panoply,
 T' elude the dreaded stroke ; Death's barbed shaft
 Will find its way, between his armour's joints,
 With fatal speed ; the son of splendour sinks,
 To shroud his prostrate glory in the dust.

When the dark demons of the storm arise
 In wild commotion : rending tempests rave :
 Harsh thunders roll, and lurid lightnings dart
 Their baleful fires ; the startled billows heave,
 With maddening rage, from Ocean's yawning depths,
 And fell Despair sits low'ring on the waves ;
 Pavilion'd 'mid the gloom, triumphant Death
 In might terrific rides, howls in the blast,
 And mocks the shipwreck'd seaman's dying groans. †
 When War, wide-wasting, rears his gory crest
 With desolation plum'd ; and horror far

* Ahab. 1 Kings, xxii. v. 30.

† Ponto nox incubat atra ;
 Intonuere poli : et crebris micat ignibus æther,
 Præsentemque viris intentant omnia mortem.

Virgil.

Extends his cheerless empire ; Man's last foe,
 With reckless fury mounts his pallid horse,
 To scatter havoc o'er the battle plain.
 Varied the characters which Death assumes,
 To act his part in life's eventful drama ;
 He, Proteus-like, " can change with every change," *
 Not only rides the rushing whirlwind's wing,
 Or plants his standard on th' ensanguin'd field
 Of ruthless carnage ; he not only comes,
 A long-expected, oft-invited guest,
 To Sorrow's haunt ; where famish'd wretches heave
 The sigh of dissolution ; to the cell
 Where Slavery clanks her fetters, and the sons
 Of Misery pour the plaintive tale of woe,
 Unheeded to the passing gales of night :
 But o'er his meagre form, the mantle throws
 Of dark dissimulation and disguise ;
 Advances oft with Pleasure's rose buds crown'd,
 Breathing contagion o'er the festive bowl ;
 Like an assassin unsuspected, wears
 Conceal'd beneath his meretricious garb,
 The deadly poniard ; and when man is lull'd

* *Omnia transformat sese in miracula rerum,*

Ignemque, horribilemque, feram, fluviumque liquentem. Virgil.

In balmy slumbers on the lap of ease,
 Indulging dreams of visionary bliss,
 The monster strikes, and glorying in his might,
 Gives him and all his projects to the grave.
 "Man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?"
 No longer 'mid the dazzling scenes of joy,
 The glare of fortune, and the blaze of wealth,
 He quaffs the rich, intoxicating draughts
 Of Pleasure's chalice—Folly drops her mask,
 And Dissipation's gay delusions cease :
 Darkness his canopy, the dust his bed,
 He sleeps, the long oblivious sleep of death,
 Till the last trump shall rouse the dormant dead.

Shall rouse the dead? yes, Resurrection's morn
 Will see them burst the barriers of the grave,
 And rise to bliss, or sink to endless woe.
 The dark is light—a ray of glory gilds
 The dreary sepulchre, and Jacob's Star
 Sheds a bright lustre o'er its ghastly scenes.

When on the Sinner's head, Jehovah hurl'd
 The curses of his vengeance, through the clouds,
 Which veil'd the Throne of Justice, Mercy's rays

Resplendent beam'd—"The woman's seed shall bruise
The serpent's head."

Ye ransom'd nations, raise
The song of gratulation ; list the lay,
Which chaunting Seraphim, o'er Bethlehem's field,
Hymn'd to their golden harps—Angelic choirs,
With whose exulting shouts th' empyrean rang,
At Nature's birth, now strike their heavenly lyres,
To nobler strains : to celebrate the morn,
When scattering far the gloom of Reason's night,
The mists of Superstition, and the clouds
Of Ignorance and Error, from on high
The Sun of Righteousness with glory dawn'd
On Earth's bewilder'd regions.

Veil'd in flesh,
The King of Heaven, the co-eternal Son
Of God Almighty, 'fore whose starry throne,
Celestial hierarchies adoring bow'd,
Ere earth arose from chaos' dark abyss ;
Stoop'd from the climes of blessedness, to dwell
On this terraqueous globe. To ransom man,
He toil'd, he suffer'd, agoniz'd, and died.

Despairing sinner ! lift the streaming eye
 Of penitential woe, to Calvary's cross,
 Behold the Lord of Glory writhing there,
 For thy transgressions; sorrows rack his soul
 With pangs of human guilt : Creation groans,
 And Nature drops a sympathetic tear.

For man he died—for man he rose again—
 On the third hallowed morn, ere day's bright orb
 Had from the mountains chas'd the lingering mist,
 The white-rob'd messengers of light proclaim'd
 The Lord is risen ! He broke the chains of death,
 And like the powerful Nazarene of old,
 When, rising in his might, he bore away
 The gates of Gaza on his potent arms, *
 Messiah rose immortal from the tomb,
 And 'mid the songs of cherub legions bore,
 Victorious Prince ! the spoils of vanquish'd Hell.

Sing to the Lord, for He hath triumph'd—He
 Rescued with might and majesty, the tribes
 Of captive Israel, from th' oppressive yoke

* Judges, xvi. v. 3.

Of Egypt's thralldom ; foil'd their haughty foes ;
 And ope'd a passage to the smiling shores
 Of fertile Canaan, through the Jordan's waves.
 But vast, transcendant miracle of love,
 Mysterious work of wonder ! He, whose word
 Call'd forth Creation's glories, once expir'd,
 To save rebellious man : to break the chains
 Of Sin's inglorious bondage : to reveal
 A path through Death's dark, melancholy realms,
 To Heaven's bright courts of holiness and joy.
 Sing to the Lord, for he hath triumph'd ; yea,
 Most gloriously he triumph'd. Sing, ye heav'ns,
 And earth rejoicing shout—let Nature raise,
 From all her fanes, a universal hymn,
 To celebrate thy conquests, Lamb of God !
 When thou hadst overcome the pangs of death,
 God of Salvation ! thy victorious arm
 Unbarr'd the gates of everlasting life
 To all believers.

Thron'd where Seraphs chant
 In glory's holy temple, songs of praise,
 Immanuel reigns, our great High Priest and King,
 Till that eventful day, when Heaven shall ope

Its dazzling vestibules, and stripping off
 His mediatorial vest, with terrors arm'd,
 Messiah comes to judgment.

Far beyond

The transient scenes of earth, and earthly pomp,
 Imagination wings her airy flight
 To that dread period, when with grandeur clad,
 The heaven-commissioned angel shall descend,
 And swear by Him, who lives for evermore,
 (While all Creation echoes to his voice,
 As the wild desert to the lion's roar)
 That Time shall be no longer.*

Lo ! He comes !

Once the despis'd, ignoble Nazarene,
 The Carpenter of Galilee—He comes !
 The King of Glory, Nature's awful Judge;
 On wings of Cherubim He rides sublime,
 And Heaven's triumphant hosts proclaim Him near.

The trump of doom resounds—the thrilling blast
 Convulses Earth, and shakes the shores of Hell—

* Revelations, x. v. 5, 6.

The monumental piles are cleft—the graves
 Yield their awaken'd tenants—nations rise—
 Yea, thronging multitudes obey the call,
 And burst the prison doors of Death's domain,
 To meet their God.

The wheels of Nature stand—
 That mighty arm, which form'd this wond'rous globe,
 Which rear'd the firmamental pillars high,
 And sent the stars rejoicing in their course,
 Is now outstretch'd, to light the funeral pyre
 Of all terrestrial things.

The wasting fires
 Of dissolution rage—the mountains bow
 Their hoary summits—while each wood-crown'd height,
 Each frowning rock, and lofty turret 'whelm'd,
 Beneath the dreadful conflagration sinks.
 The Sun withdraws his light—the starry orbs
 Forsake their glittering spheres to shine no more—
 The Moon withholds her brightness—darkness reigns :
 The Earth is swept away—the Heav'ns depart ;
 And Desolation's angel makes a pause—
 A final pause, to view his work complete.

Is this the coming of the Son of Man?
 Of Him, who once vouchsaf'd to sojourn here,
 The man of sorrows, intimate with grief?
 O, how unlike his first descent, unlike
 Him, whom the Magi worshipp'd ; Him, who left
 The choirs of bliss, the glory of his throne,
 To preach salvation to a guilty world !

Where now his bold despisers—where his foes,
 Who set at nought the offers of his grace,
 Who scorn the joys of Heaven, and laugh at Hell ?
 No more shall prosperous Vice exulting raise
 His dauntless front ; nor humble Virtue droop
 Her head neglected : men shall cease to doubt
 Christ's power to punish, or his power to save :
 Then all, yea, e'en his enemies shall bow
 The knee of adoration, and confess,
 Like Baal's worshippers on Carmel's mount,
 The Lord is God, the Lord he is the God. *

O, then shall Mercy's oft neglected call
 Be heard no more ; but He, whose frown is death,

* 1 Kings, xviii. v. 39.

Shall seize the lightnings of eternal wrath,
And hurl damnation on the sinner's head.

And are there, who, amid the mighty wreck,
And smoking ruins of a falling globe,
Can stand secure, and undismay'd can hear
Th' Archangel's loud, resuscitating blast ?
Yes, from the gloomy caverns of the dead,
The just shall start to everlasting life.
Like Daniel, in the proud Assyrian's halls,
When all around was tumult and dismay,
The saint shall stand serene ; * the blazing Heav'ns,
The reeling Earth, the rocking Firmament,
The falling Stars, and Nature's dying pangs,
To him are harbingers of endless rest—
Are but the heralds of celestial peace.

The saints shall rise to glory ; rise to reign,
“ High in salvation, and the climes of bliss :” †

* ————— Up the voiceless halls
He moves, nor doth the white and ashen fear
That paints all faces, change one line of his.

Milman's Belshazzar.

† *Paradise Lost*, book 11, v. 708.

There, with the ransom'd multitudes, to swell
 The sacred chorus of eternal praise.
 Then joy shall be consummate ; then the shouts
 Of victory peal thro' Heaven's effulgent dome ;
 Messiah reigns triumphant ; Satan's hosts
 Are fully vanquish'd ; Death shall be no more !
 And Time, with all his desolating woes,
 Shall be forgotten in the rapt'rous strains
 Of glad Eternity's unceasing songs.
 No night of grief shall close that happy day—
 No storms of sorrow veil that cloudless sky ;
 For there the Sun of Righteousness displays
 His beams, to gild with everlasting light,
 The bright pavilions of the sons of God.

Such are the scenes, which Revelation shews
 Beyond the vale of Time ; a heaven, whose joys
 Shall know no end ; a hell, whose pangs no pause.
 Will Man then, still infatuated, dance
 On danger's precipice, and madly brave
 The thunders of Omnipotence—the fires
 Of everlasting woe ? Death's fatal dart
 May now be rais'd to strike—the blow be given ;
 To-morrow's sun may gild his funeral bier.

Then, O, how happy he, whose mind is stay'd
 On God, the Rock of strength, whose only trust
 Is plac'd for succour on a Saviour's arm !*
 Girt with the heavenly panoply of faith,
 Let Persecution wave her slaughtering brand—
 Let dark Distress, in various garbs of grief,
 Lead on her weeping train ; let Death himself
 Uplift his threat'ning lance ; he knows no fear :
 The Lord is his defence—the God of Hosts
 His never-failing refuge ; let the floods
 Of Dissolution's flaming deluge toss
 Their fiery billows ; let the heav'ns be rent ;
 And thunder sound Creation's funeral knell :
 Yea, let the whirlwind of Jehovah's wrath
 Destroy the wicked ; he shall smile in peace ;
 For He, who weighs the destinies of Man,
 Shall then bestow the diadem of bliss,
 And shouting Angels hail his glad approach,
 To join their choirs, to taste celestial joys—
 Joys, that shall flourish with unfading bloom.

* Isaiah xxvi. v. 8.

THE INAUGURATION OF SAUL.

A POETIC SKETCH.

“ At length the Israelites, weary of having God for their king, desired a king to be set over them, “ to judge them like all the nations,” thus undesignedly fulfilling the designs of the Almighty, who had ordained that in the fulness of time, the Messiah should be born of a royal house.”

Horn.

Although Jehovali's wonder-working hand
Was oft outstretch'd to shield Judea's land ;
Although his chosen race were wont to prove
The frequent tokens of his fostering love :
Rebellious Israel still his rule disdain'd,
And of their form of government complain'd :
They saw, with envious eyes, the pomp which blaz'd
In circling rays, where neighbouring monarchs rais'd
Their gorgeous thrones: they mark'd the splendid trains,
Which led their armies to the battle plains ;
And ask'd a king, to lead *their* bands to war ;
T' extend their power ; to spread their fame afar ;

To sway the rod of empire ; and to guide
 The helm of state on Glory's prosperous tide.
 To Ramah, where Elkanah's son abode,
 Th' anointed prophet of the living God,
 Illustrious Samuel, heaven-instructed sage,
 Whose eye could scan futurity's dim page—
 Th' inquiring tribes of Jewish elders came,
 And urg'd with ill-tim'd zeal their impious claim.
 With grief, the reverend seer their mad request
 Heard, and his keen remonstrances exprest :
 But Israel's stubborn tribes a monarch claim'd,
 Reckless of all, the man of God exclaim'd.

Near Samuel's tent, a sacred altar stood,
 Which oft was lav'd with sacrificial blood ;
 Whence vows of Piety arose on high,
 And clouds of incense mounted to the sky ;
 Here, resting from the busy scenes of life,
 His sacerdotal offices, the strife
 Of civil discord, or the battle field,
 He tasted joys, which earth can never yield. *
 Here, as he bow'd before the hallow'd shrine,

* "That peace, which the world cannot give."

Church of England Liturgy.

He felt an antepast of bliss divine :
 Jehovah's glory round his altar shone,
 And Peace descended from th' Eternal's throne ;
 Some Seraph's hand the veil of Time withdrew,
 And ope'd celestial visions to his view ;
 Pourtray'd the transports of the just above,
 In heaven's bright home of holiness and love.
 To this blest spot, the prophet now repair'd,
 And there with awe his holocaust prepar'd,
 T' invoke the Lord.

The setting orb of day
 With beaming glories mark'd his western way,
 And " twilight grey " along the dusky plain,
 In " sober liv'ry " clad, led on her train ;
 ' Tranquillity maintain'd her sway serene,
 While hov'ring Angels sanctify'd the scene ;
 Amid the stillness, Samuel's offering blaz'd,
 And thus the seer devotion's language rais'd :

' Eternal God ! before whose throne sublime,
 ' Archangels worshipp'd, ere the birth of Time ;
 ' Maker Omnipotent ! whose kingly power
 ' Shall stand unshaken at that awful hour,

‘ When earthly states, and Nature’s self expire,
 ‘ Beneath the floods of Dissolution’s fire ;
 ‘ Father of mercies ! God of Jacob ! hear :
 ‘ From thine exalted seat, incline thine ear.
 ‘ Oft, Lord, have Israel’s tribes thy anger mov’d,
 ‘ Tho’ oft indeed thy loving kindness prov’d ;
 ‘ This day again a rash request they bring,
 ‘ And ask that Judah’s land may own a king ;
 ‘ Thou, who didst listen to thy servant’s prayer,
 ‘ And didst vouchsafe the murmuring host to spare ;
 ‘ Who when th’ avenging sword, at thy command,
 ‘ In wrath was rais’d, to scourge a guilty land,
 ‘ Didst still th’ atoning supplication hear,
 ‘ And stay Death’s Angel in his dread career ;
 ‘ God of Sabaoth ! with forgiving eye
 ‘ Regard their errors—hear my humble cry ;
 ‘ And with thy Justice, Lord of Heaven, again
 ‘ Let not the sacred voice of Mercy plead in vain.’

As thus the seer with holy fervour pray’d,
 The terrors of his might, the Lord display’d :
 His awful lightnings blaz’d : his thunder shock’d
 The spacious firmament—Creation rock’d ;
 (As when the base of cloud-capt Sinai shook,

And conscious Nature trembled at his look.)
 At length the prophet saw, with dread surprise,
 Bright rays of glory stream along the skies ;
 Th' Almighty Sovereign bade the tempest cease,
 The thunder's roar was hush'd, and all was peace.
 A still, small voice, the solemn silence broke,
 And from the height of heaven, Jehovah spoke.

‘ Dares Israel, still presumptuous, lift the hand
 ‘ Of proud defiance ’gainst their God’s command ?
 ‘ E’er since the day, when I salvation wrought,
 ‘ And from the house of cruel bondage brought
 ‘ Their captive tribes, have they rebellious prov’d,
 ‘ And Baal’s impious idol-worship lov’d :
 ‘ Now Samuel, hearken to the people’s voice,
 ‘ Grant this deluded race their wilful choice.’

A pause ensued—again the thunder’s roar
 Peal’d awfully tremendous ; terror bore
 On high her fiery banners ; o’er heav’n’s arch,
 Majestic grandeur held her dazzling march :
 As tho’ the chariot of the King of Kings
 Was borne aloft, on flaming Cherubs’ wings ;
 While raging whirlwinds howl’d th’ Eternal’s wrath,

And vivid lightnings mark'd his dreadful path.
 The glorious vision past—Night's lucid queen
 With chasten'd radiance gilds the sacred scene;
 The starry hosts bedeck th' empyreal plain :
 And silence holds her unmolested reign.

At Samuel's word, the elders now return'd,
 Each to his city—till their priest had learn'd,
 Whom God design'd to fill the Jewish throne,
 Whose sovereign power, their warlike bands should own.

The rosy curtains of the morn unfold ;
 (That morn, which Israel panted to behold :)
 On Mizpeh's plains conven'd, the people wait
 To meet their prince, the guardian of the state ;
 With solemn pomp, the hoary seer appears,
 And these his words, the vast assembly hears :—

‘ Children of Abraham, the Lord of Hosts
 ‘ Has oft protected our invaded coasts;
 ‘ Our tribes from Egypt's land of slaves has led
 ‘ With his right arm, and with his mercy fed ;
 ‘ Whene'er oppression urg'd its horrent reign,
 ‘ God was at hand, his chosen to sustain :

' That God ye have rejected—yea, desir'd
 ' An earthly king, and human laws requir'd ;
 ' Now by your tribes, and families draw near,
 ' That God's fair choice may manifest appear.'

The lot is cast, by heaven ordain'd to fall
 Upon the son of Kish, the valiant Saul.
 (Him had the prophet, near whose hallow'd home,
 In search of asses, Saul had chanc'd to roam,
 At God's command anointed, and declar'd
 The royal honour for his guest prepar'd.)
 But who would wish, when deep-ton'd thunders roll,
 And death-wing'd lightnings fire the trembling pole,
 When blasting storms Creation's face deform,
 To launch his vessel 'mid the threat'ning storm ?
 A throne of peace is but a throne of care,
 A throne of war's beset with many a snare.
 Well then might Saul th' exalted seat decline,
 And seek the crown of empire to resign.

No longer from the anxious crowd conceal'd,
 Their king stands forth—the monarch is reveal'd ;
 In form majestic—dignity and grace
 Adorn'd his frame, and beam'd upon his face ;

Oft had he brav'd the dangers of the field,
 His arm the martial lance could boldly wield,
 Had oft the spoils of conquest borne away,
 And robb'd the lion of his trembling prey :
 Around his princely temples, fair renown
 Had girt the frontlet of her starry crown ;
 While unassuming worth, and virtue shed
 A lovely halo round th' anointed head.
 Had Samuel then proclaim'd, with warning voice,
 When gladness bade th' applauding hosts rejoice,
 The sinful deeds, which should hereafter stain
 With spots of infamy, his hated reign—
 How, Hazael-like, would Saul the seer have spurn'd,
 And from his prophecy, in anger turn'd. *

Scarce had the shouts of loyalty been heard,
 Ere Disaffection's gorgon head was rear'd ;
 Envy and scorn, detested sisters, raise
 Their hideous fronts to fan sedition's blaze.
 Thus some their king despise, while some obey—
 The Lord's anointed shap'd his homeward way,
 Till glory's call should break his short repose,
 And urge him on to meet his nation's foes.

* 2 Kings, viii. v. 13.

War sounds his clarion : Ammon's well-arm'd band
 Comes on to desolate Judea's land :
 Wide wave their crests—a "forest huge of spears,"
 Of burnish'd helms, and glitt'ring shields appears ;
 While hosts, as countless as the grains of sand,
 Which lie conceal'd along the sea-wash'd strand ;
 Or as the stars, which gild yon ebon sphere,
 Their spreading tents near Jabesh-Gilead rear.
 The damps of terror o'er the town are shed ;
 Joy flies, and valour bows its drooping head ;
 The fearful habitants, opprest with grief,
 And urg'd to seek for powerful, prompt relief,
 A mournful embassy to Gibeah send,
 Beseeching Saul, his regal aid to lend :
 The sad ambassadors their monarch found,
 Like Rome's Dictator, cultivating ground. *

The Spirit of the Lord his soul inspires,
 A patriot's zeal his glowing bosom fires ;
 A yoke of kine the wrathful monarch slays,

* "Cincinnatus—a man who had for some time given up all views of ambition, and retired to his little farm, where the Deputies of the Senate found him holding the plough, and dressed in the mean attire of a labouring husbandman."
Goldsmith.

And to th' assembled multitude, displays
 Their mangled limbs ; exclaiming with a voice
 Of high authority—‘ To him, whose choice
 ‘ Shall lead him to desert his country’s cause,
 ‘ To crouch submissively to foreign laws,
 ‘ Shall retributive vengeance be repaid ;
 ‘ His flocks and herds shall fall beneath the blade
 ‘ Of the destroyer—as these oxen fall
 ‘ By my right hand.’—Rous’d by this royal call,
 A mighty army to his standard prest ;
 The most inactive now forego their rest ;
 Youth bursts the bands of pleasure’s silken chains,
 Enfeebled age forgets awhile its pains ;
 The nation’s weal this sacrifice demands ;
 Zeal fires their hearts, and courage nerves their hands ;
 Welcome the tent, the sword, the spear, the shield,
 Welcome the dangers of the battle field ;
 ’Tis Justice calls, she waves her banner high,
 Say, who shall scorn her spirit-stirring cry ?

The son of Kish resign’d his shepherd’s crook,
 And in its stead, a martial javelin took ;
 For peasant’s garb assum’d a warrior’s vest ;
 Stern valour brooded o’er his towering crest ;

His sword within his broider'd baldric hung,
And o'er his mail, a splendid robe was flung.

Led by their princely chief, the troops obey'd
The call of Liberty ; for fight array'd,
Their rapid march the valiant warriors sped,
While sable-vested night her curtains spread.

Meanwhile the Pagans form'd their warring trains,
In "beauteous horror" camp'd along the plains ;
The rites prepar'd : the blood-stain'd altars rais'd
To Moloch's idol, human victims blaz'd.
No hov'ring Seraphim, whose heavenly lays,
Unheard of mortals, hymn Jehovah's praise :
No sons of glory, Cherubim divine,
Spread their bright pinions o'er the cursed shrine ;
But fiends of cruelty, a circle dire,
Black Superstition summon'd round the pyre :
Exulting furies shriek'd a hideous yell.
And scoffing demons wav'd the torch of hell.
Their impious orgies o'er : the last faint cry
Of immolated infants pierc'd the sky ;
Th' unhallow'd flames of sacrifice expir'd,

As Ammon's soldiers to their tents retir'd. *
 There, while the moon diffus'd her silvery beams,
 And awful stillness reign'd, in fancy's dreams,
 They fought the coming fight—the conflict won,
 Thought on the past, their deeds of prowess done ;
 “ And 'neath the lightning of their brandish'd spears,”
 Saw Israel's crouching hosts confess their fears ;
 Beheld the heav'n-protected kingdom fall,
 And snatch'd the sceptre from the hand of Saul.
 For when ambition fires the ardent soul,
 Let horrors rage—let storms of terror roll,
 Lur'd by the glare of grandeur's dazzling crown,
 Urg'd by the plaudits of the world's renown ;
 Thro' threat'ning foes, the warrior hews his way,
 To reap the bloody harvest of the fray ;
 Wades to the dizzy height, thro' seas of gore,
 Nor stops, till death declares his turmoils o'er.

Scarce had the ruddy morn with roses pav'd
 Th' empyreal hills, ere Judah's banners wav'd

* Moloch was the acknowledged god of the Ammonites, part of whose worship consisted in offering up their helpless infants, as propitiatory sacrifices to their idol deity.

In front of Ammon's camp, where death-like sleep
 Was still allow'd its silent seat to keep ;
 Save where some sentry pac'd his lonely round,
 Or matin trumpeter his bugle wound. *

The silver trumpets sound ; † the squadrons shout :
 The dreadful dissonance of battle rout
 Rings thro' the vale : astounding was the clang,
 As sword on sword, and lance on armour rang.
 But see, he comes, with wildly horrid air,
 Like the rous'd lion from his gory lair,
 Impetuous Nahash ; full of fury's fire :
 ' Spirit of Ammon's god, our breasts inspire ;
 ' Powers of Destruction ! sit upon our swords ;
 ' On—on to glorious conquest :—scarce the words
 Had pass'd his lips, before the deadly blow
 Of some brave hero laid the tyrant low.

The heathens fly ; their scatter'd shields and spears,
 Their quick-abandon'd tents proclaim their fears ;

* " So he passed over Jordan, and proceeded in marching all that night, thirty furlongs, and came to Jahesh before sun-rising. So he fell upon their enemies on the sudden, and joining battle with them, they slew a great many of the Ammonites, as also their king Nahash." *Josephus.*

+ Numbers x. v. 9.

Where'er the conquerors march, reigns pale dismay,
 With giant strides, gaunt havoc marks their way :
 Dying and victors join promiscuous cries ;
 Groans and triumphant shouts ascend the skies.
 Full many an eye was clos'd in death's long sleep ;
 Full many a widow's heart was made to weep :
 Full many a parent mourn'd his children's fate,
 And many a father bled to serve the State.

At length with slaughter sated, Judah sheath'd
 The sword of death ; while Fame her laurels wreath'd,
 To crown their crested helms.

Victorious Saul

Was now with joy acknowledg'd king by all ;
 The fickle crowd, inconstant as the wind,
 To celebrate his prowess then combin'd ;
 And ask'd that they, who scorn'd his power to save,
 Should be condemn'd to fill a traitor's grave ;
 But Mercy pleads, forbid that honours gain'd
 By valour, should by deeds of blood be stain'd.

Th' assembled hosts to Gilgal now repair'd :
 (Gilgal—where first the joyous tribes prepar'd

Their sacrificial feasts, when God's command
 Had ope'd a passage to the promis'd land ;
 When the majestic streams of Jordan's flood
 T' admit the ransom'd throng, like mountains stood.)

It was a goodly sight : their tents o'erspread
 The spacious plain : the setting sun-beams shed
 A glorious light along the festal scene,
 Bright shone their helmets, and dazzling was the sheen
 Of furbish'd spears ; from camp to camp the clang
 Of trumpet blasts, and well-tun'd cymbals rang ;
 Triumphantly the Lion banners wav'd : *
 And anthems rose to Him, whose arm had sav'd.
 It was a sight, like that which met the view
 Of Pethor's seer, and blessings from him drew ; †
 ' How goodly are thy tents, thou favour'd race !
 ' How bless'd, O Jacob, is thy dwelling place !
 ' Like verdant vallies, by the river's side ;
 ' Or gardens blooming with luxuriant pride :
 ' Thy conquering might, thy foes have oft confest ;
 ' Thy God hath blest thee, and thou shalt be blest.'

* The banner of Judah was a Lion.

† Balaam.—Numbers xxiv.

Melodious harps, and timbrels' ruder sound,
 Celestial harmony diffus'd around ;
 With pious gratitude, their altars blaz'd ;
 And thankful songs Jehovah's goodness prais'd.

To God, Eternal King,
 Our fervent vows be given ;
 Whose praises Angels sing
 Amid the courts of heaven.
 To God, the God of glory, raise
 Hymns of triumph, songs of praise.

He guides the battle car,
 He sways the wand of peace,
 He stills the din of war,
 He bids contentions cease.
 To God, the God of battles, raise
 Hymns of triumph, songs of praise.

By Saul's victorious hand,
 Hath He salvation wrought ;
 For Judah's favour'd land,
 The Lord of Hosts hath fought :

To God, the God of Judah, raise
Hymns of triumph, songs of praise.

Proud Ammon “licks the dust,”
His boasted power’s o’erthrown ;
So perish, Lord, the trust
Of all who Thee disown.

To God, the God of Vengeance, raise
Hymns of triumph, songs of praise.

Ye sons of Israel, join
Your lays t’ extol his name ;
Ye virgin troops combine
His goodness to proclaim.
To God, the God of Mercy, raise
Hymns of triumph, songs of praise.

While holy pleasure beam’d in every eye,
And gladness reign’d, the hoary priest drew nigh ;
Hush’d were the strains of melody and song,
As thus the Seer address’d the listening throng :—

‘ O Israel, hear ! full seventy years have shed
‘ Time’s blanching frosts upon my aged head ;

‘ In Judah’s land I’ve dwelt e’er since the day,
 ‘ When first my infant lips were taught to pray
 ‘ In Shiloh’s sacred courts—bear witness now,
 ‘ Has dark injustice ever stain’d my brow ?
 ‘ Whom have I injur’d, whom have I oppress’d ?
 ‘ Whose ox or ass illegally possess’d ?
 ‘ To these my solemn questions make reply,
 “ My witness is in heaven, my record is on high.”

‘ The Lord is witness,’ Israel’s host proclaim’d,
 ‘ That thou art upright.’ Then the Seer exclaim’d,
 ‘ Children of Jacob, list with sacred awe
 ‘ To those amazing acts your fathers saw,
 ‘ And which ourselves have seen, when rob’d with might,
 ‘ The Lord Jehovah from the glorious height
 ‘ Of his sublime abode destroy’d our foes,
 ‘ And for our succour deign’d to interpose.

‘ When Memphian Pharaoh rais’d Oppression’s rod,
 ‘ And Israel’s tribes the paths of slavery trod,
 ‘ He led them forth from Egypt’s stubborn land,
 ‘ By his omnipotent, pride-humbling hand ;
 ‘ And when the sceptred Infidel pursued,
 ‘ That Goshen’s sojourners might be subdued,

‘ God on the chariots of salvation rode,
 ‘ The cleaving Ocean’s waves a pathway shew’d ;
 ‘ The ransom’d hosts securely pass’d along ;
 ‘ With furious speed advanc’d the martial throng ;
 ‘ But o’er the deep, the son of Amram sway’d
 ‘ His potent rod ; the rushing sea obey’d ;
 ‘ The roaring billows lash’d the trembling shore ;
 ‘ The heathen squadrons sank, to rise no more !
 ‘ When pacing o’er the desert’s scorching beds,
 ‘ Pale thirst and famine droop’d their fainting heads,
 ‘ From Horeb’s rock, pellucid fountains ran,
 ‘ And angels’ food was shower’d on mortal man.
 ‘ When blasting war his gory flag unfurl’d,
 ‘ Th’ Omnipotent his bolts of vengeance hurl’d
 ‘ Against his people’s foes : their vanquish’d coasts
 ‘ Confess’d thy power, triumphant Lord of Hosts !
 ‘ Witness, thou Jericho, whose sinking walls,
 ‘ Whose towering battlements, and splendid halls,
 ‘ In one prodigious mass of ruins fell.
 ‘ When God arose, his enemies to quell.
 ‘ Witness, thou Gibeon, o’er whose lofty height,
 ‘ At Joshua’s word, the day delay’d its flight,
 ‘ And night’s pale queen, o’er Ajalon’s low vale,
 ‘ Paus’d, to behold Judea’s bands prevail.

‘ Witness, thou Kishon, whose “gore-crimson’d” waves
 ‘ Moan’d mournfully o’er Canaanitish graves,
 ‘ When from the clouds, “as from a well-drawn bow,”
 ‘ Th’ Eternal stoop’d, the darts of wrath to throw :
 ‘ The mighty trembled at the dread display,
 ‘ And Jabin’s legions own’d th’ Almighty’s sway.

‘ Shall I enumerate the goodly band
 ‘ Of worthy chieftains, who have serv’d our land ?
 ‘ Othniel—zealous for his country’s good :
 ‘ Ehud—whose dagger drank proud Eglon’s blood :
 ‘ And Anath’s valiant son, whose daring power
 ‘ Made tyrants fall, and grim Oppression cower ?
 ‘ Say, who with more than mortal courage nerv’d
 ‘ Brave Gideon’s arm ? Who, but the God he serv’d ?
 ‘ What hand directed Jephtha’s battle car,
 ‘ When fell invasion rang the blast of war ?
 ‘ Who strengthen’d lion-slaying Samson’s grasp,
 ‘ When Dagon’s temple totter’d in his clasp ?
 ‘ On Mizpeh’s plains, when Israel’s armies held
 ‘ A solemn fast—when ye, with fear, beheld
 ‘ Philistia’s hosts uplift the hostile lance,
 ‘ And arm’d with terrors, to the field advance :
 ‘ I cried to God, and He, who thron’d on high,

‘ Reigns King of Kings, with thunder shook the sky ;
 ‘ Wing’d with destruction’s fires, his lightning flew,
 ‘ And our blaspheming adversaries slew.

‘ Jeshurun’s Saviour is a God of might ;
 ‘ Our guard in peace—our buckler in the fight ;
 ‘ O’er danger’s path, thro’ sorrow’s deepening gloom,
 ‘ He guides our steps, and points to bliss to come :
 ‘ And tho’ the waste be drear, the valley dark,
 ‘ Celestial glory shines around our ark.
 ‘ Could all the gods, which Egypt’s vassals own,
 ‘ E’er by their might establish Pharaoh’s throne ?
 ‘ Did Ammon’s deities possess more power,
 ‘ To succour Nahash in an evil hour ?
 ‘ Was God’s arm shorten’d, that it could not save ?
 ‘ Had He forgotten to defend the brave ?
 ‘ Yet, when ye heard the threat’ning voice of war,
 ‘ And mark’d the rattling of his griding car,
 ‘ Your unbelieving hearts, with terror weak,
 ‘ Resolv’d a king—an earthly king to seek.
 ‘ Behold your monarch ! serve the Lord with fear,
 ‘ Then peace and joy shall raise their altars here.
 ‘ But if ye prove rebellious to the Lord,
 ‘ Despise his laws, and scorn his holy word,

‘ Your black ingratitude to Nature’s king,
 ‘ Shall on your land, deserv’d destruction bring.
 ‘ Lift up your eyes—see yonder fertile field,
 ‘ Its plenteous harvest-fruits prepar’d to yield ;
 ‘ E’en *now*, shall Heaven’s astounding thunders roar,
 ‘ And from on high, a whelming deluge pour ; *
 ‘ That ye may know, your wickedness is great,
 ‘ In wishing Man to guide the helm of State.’

On lightning’s wings the tempest spirits fly ;
 “ Rent is the fleecy mantle of the sky ;”
 The firmament with signs of horror teems,
 And storms of rain descend in rushing streams.

As stands aghast the sinner, round whose head,
 The low’ring clouds of dark despair are spread ;
 When conscience, faithful monitor, begins
 To shew a catalogue of damning sins,
 To lift the veil, which hides the day of doom,
 To tell of judgment, and a world to come ;

* This sudden conflict of the elements was calculated to produce a powerful impression on the minds of the Israelites, as, according to Geographers, neither thunder nor rain is known in Judea during the months of harvest.

So struck with dread, the trembling tribes deplore
 Their past offence ; and Samuel's prayers implore.
 The Prophet stills the whirlwind's hurrying din,
 And calms the mental storms which rage within.

‘ Fear not, our God is merciful, tho’ just ;
 ‘ Worship in holiness ; his wisdom trust ;
 ‘ Confide in Him, eternal Lord of all,
 ‘ And ne’er before an idol altar fall :
 ‘ Then shall the cheering joys of peace abound,
 ‘ Fair plenty reign, and gladness sing around ;
 ‘ Prosperity proclaim our land her own ;
 ‘ And glory here erect her dazzling throne.
 ‘ But if, alas ! ye stray from duty’s path,
 ‘ No dews of grace shall fall ; the storms of wrath
 ‘ Shall sweep away your joys with furious howl ;
 ‘ Where Plenty smiles, shall Desolation scowl ;
 ‘ Expell’d from Judah’s consecrated plains,
 ‘ In foreign climes, to drag a captive’s chains,
 ‘ None shall regard your woes, or heed your vows ;
 ‘ Th’ Almighty’s curse shall mark your care-worn brows ;
 ‘ And doom your tribes, thro’ exile’s wearying years,
 ‘ To shed Contrition’s unavailing tears.
 ‘ These fertile hills, where happiness prevails,

- ‘ Shall echo to the widow’s plaintive wails,
- ‘ The ruin’d virgin’s shrieks, the matron’s cries,
- ‘ While taunting victors mock affliction’s sighs.
- ‘ Wide-wasting war shall urge his hell-hounds on ;
- ‘ Triumphant havoc point to glories gone ;
- ‘ Gaunt devastation spread his ghastly pall,
- ‘ And one black robe of ruin mantle all.’

When thus the Seer had spoken, tow’rds the sky
In prayer he rais’d Devotion’s suppliant eye.

- ‘ Saviour of all, who put their trust in thee !
- ‘ Omnipotent Protector ! deign to hear
- ‘ My humble supplication. Blessed God !
- ‘ Who with a word canst form ten thousand worlds,
- ‘ Or hurl the mightiest empires of the earth
- ‘ To dust and nothingness ; with favour look
- ‘ On these assembled tribes, who now desire
- ‘ To pay their vows before thy Mercy Seat.
- ‘ Should war unfurl his banner—should the bands
- ‘ Of some blasphemer march with threatening front,
- ‘ O may that arm, which crush’d th’ Egyptian’s might,
- ‘ And spoil’d Philistia’s hosts, be then outstretch’d

- ‘ To shield our land : for when with terrors clad,
- ‘ Almighty ! Thou arisest in thy wrath,
- ‘ Who, Lord, can stand before Thee ? who abide
- ‘ Thy righteous indignation ? Vice, appall’d,
- ‘ Shrinks blasted from thy presence ; Nature quakes,
- ‘ And owns with trembling awe her Maker’s power.
- ‘ Lord of Eternity ! be Thou our help :
- ‘ God of our fathers ! be thy servants’ guide :
- ‘ And let thy blessings, like the genial dews
- ‘ On Hermon’s top, in rich abundance fall
- ‘ On this thine heritage ; that Israel’s foes,
- ‘ And every nation under heaven may know,
- ‘ That Thou, Jehovah, Thou art God alone,
- ‘ Mighty to punish—mighty to redeem !’



THE HERMIT.

I dreamt
Of joys perpetual in perpetual change,
Of stable pleasures on the tossing wave,
Eternal sun-shine in the storms of life !

Young.

The last golden beams of the sun
Illumin'd the clouds of the West ;
Eve's star its bright march had begun
To herald the season of rest.

Reclin'd at the mouth of his cell,
Divine Meditation's retreat,
Where virtue and piety dwell,
A Hermit had taken his seat.

His features rude Time had defaced,
And wreathed his temples with snow ;
Pale Care's wither'd fingers had traced
Deep furrows of grief on his brow.

When first on the ocean of life,
 Exclaim'd he, I ventur'd to ride,
 No whirlwind of trouble or strife
 Howl'd o'er the calm waves of its tide.

Awhile my gay prospect seem'd fair,
 Around me Prosperity smil'd,
 And Pleasure, with Syren-like air,
 Enchanting, my voyage beguil'd.

Till borne by Adversity's stream
 On rocks of Affliction to fall,
 I found the world's joys but a dream—
 I found that their sweetness was gall.

I've seen the brave Hero of war
 With laurels of victory grac'd ;
 I've seen him dash'd down from his car,
 And all his proud honours effac'd.

I've seen Beauty's flourishing flowers,
 Diffusing their fragrance around ;
 I've sigh'd o'er her desolate bowers—
 Her roses had droop'd to the ground !

The Glory of Man is as grass,
 Yea, all is unstable below ;
 His pleasures proclaim, as they pass,
 Disappointment, vexation, and woe.

But, lo ! 'midst the clouds of the storm,
 The rainbow of Mercy is seen ;
 Though tempests the skies may deform,
 Religion illumines the scene.

'Tis this, which diffuses a blaze
 Of light o'er life's wildering gloom,
 And gilds, with its gladdening rays,
 The long, dreary night of the tomb.

Beyond the dark valley of Time,
 On wings of devotion I soar,
 To blissful Eternity's clime,
 Where sorrow and sighing are o'er.

There is, for the pilgrims who weep,
 In those happy regions a rest ;
 Where spirits of holiness sweep
 Their lyres in the choirs of the blest.

Yes, there, where is bliss without measure,
A peace which nought e'er shall destroy,
They lave in the rivers of pleasure,
And drink at the fountains of joy.

ON THE DEATH

OF

THE REV. W. HARDING,

Who was drowned while bathing in the River Trent, July, 1823.

Who shall forbid the eye to weep,
That saw him, from the ravening deep,
Pluck'd like the lion's prey ?
For ever bow'd his honour'd head,
The spirit in a moment fled,
The heart of friendship cold and dead,
The limbs a wreath of clay.

Montgomery.

Ah ! who can hope to rear the stable dome
Of lasting bliss, upon the turbid waves
Of Time's fast-flowing stream ; or fix his home,
Where Death's destructive whirlwind ever raves ?

Beneath whose rage the rose of beauty droops,
The pride of manhood falls, and vigour stoops.

Scarce do the flow'rs of human hope arise,
Ere disappointment blasts them in the tomb;
Scarce spread their infant blossoms to the skies,
Ere Death's rude tempests blight their early bloom :
And Life's illusive pleasures disappear,
Like phantoms gliding into empty air.

Methinks I hear, from yonder treacherous flood,
A groan proclaim, " Prepare to meet thy God,"
' O pray to Heaven to teach thee what is good,
' And seek to tread the path the Saviour trod :
' Exalt not, child of dust, thy hopes too high ;
' Who can declare I AM, and Death defy?"

Let none presume : for he, who slumbers now
In awful stillness, " where the weary rest : "
A few brief days since bore upon his brow
The wreath of happiness ; with comforts blest ;
When all was smiling round, mysterious Heaven !
By mortal eye unseen, the blow was given.

But not by mortal eye unwept he fell ;

Lamented Pastor ! o'er thy sudden doom,
Thy mourning flock—thy weeping friends can tell
What sorrows flow'd—upon thy honour'd tomb,
Religion dropt her consecrated tear ;
And Virtue's tribute dew'd thy hallow'd bier.

Herald of Heaven, how faithfully he ran
The Christian race ; how zealously he taught
Those sacred truths, which cheer the soul of man ;
How oft his words, with consolation fraught,
Were wont the balm of mercy to impart,
And soothe the troubles of the mourner's heart !

Servant of God ! thy pious work is done ;
Nor social joys, nor public worth could stay
The hand of Death : thy mortal course is run :
Thy soul has left its tenement of clay,
And wing'd its flight to yon bright realms of love,
To sing thanksgivings with the just above.

A moment's conflict, and the strife was o'er ;
A moment's pang, and Glory's crown was won ;

From earth translated to that happy shore,

Where Seraphs bow before the great Three-One :
Shall then frail man dispute Jehovah's will ?
Be hush'd rebellious murmurs, " peace, be still."

SPRING.

Come, gentle Spring, ethereal mildness, come !

Thomson.

She comes ! she comes ! with roses crown'd,
In robes of living green ;
Celestial music breathes around,
And beauty decks the scene.

She comes ! she comes ! the hills rejoice,
The verdant vallies sing ;
Creation lifts her grateful voice,
All hail, delightful Spring !

Awed by her presence, Winter flies,
His storms forget to rave ;
The Spirit of the Tempest hies
In silence to his cave.

Favonian breezes scatter sweets
 Around her bright domain ;
 Love hails her coming, Pleasure greets
 Her joy-inspiring reign.

The flowers spring up beneath her tread,
 Luxuriance clothes the plains ;
 Fair Plenty lifts her smiling head,
 And Mirth leads on her trains.

The shepherd's pipe, the virgin's lyre,
 The feather'd songster's lays,
 The bleating flock and herds, conspire,
 To celebrate her praise.

Thy temple's universal shrine,
 The clouds of incense rise ;
 Earth's unnumber'd myriads join
 The chorus of the skies.

Let all their varied pow'rs employ,
 Their choicest offerings bring ;
 And chant, with thankful songs of joy,
 Thy welcome, lovely Spring !

THE FLIGHT OF TIME.

The following lines were suggested by hearing the annual midnight peal usher in the Year 1825.

Tyrant! he changes every scene,
While he himself remains the same.

Neele.

Hark! pealing aloud 'midst the stillness of night,
Yon echoing chimings I hear;
The knell of past hours, they're proclaiming the flight
And the birth of another short year.

Yes, Time, cruel spoiler, still urges his race,
With the speed of a whirlwind he hies;
His fingers the glories of ages deface,
And Man's boasted goodness dies.

With arm of destruction he peoples the grave;
Before him vast multitudes cower;
He scatters the mighty—he conquers the brave,
E'en nations acknowledge his power.

The garlands of heroes, the sceptres of kings,
 Are snatch'd by his pitiless hand ;
 Pomp falls by his scythe ; and all earthly-born things
 Await his destroying command.

A year has past by ; and in that fleeting space,
 How many of peace have been reft !
 A year has past by ; and how many a trace
 Of care has pale Misery left !

But many there are, who have realiz'd joy,
 Which once but in prospect appear'd ;
 Be thankful ye favour'd, lest Time should destroy
 The fabric which pleasure has rear'd.

For who, among mortals, his destiny knows ?
 What eye coming fortune can see ?
 Its veil o'er the future, uncertainty throws,
 And none can declare what shall be.

A year—and the harp of the bard may be dust ;
 The hand that attunes it be chill ;
 The minstrel by death may be robb'd of his trust,
 And the hearts that he charm'd may grow still.

A year—and the laurels of glory may fade,
The flow'rets of fame cease to bloom ;
The monarch's tiara, the warrior's blade
May moulder away in the tomb.

A year—and again may the children of grief
The garments of gladness assume :
Hope dawn on the scene—and diffusing relief,
Its sun-shine their path may relume.

But should to the heirs of affliction, below
No true consolation be given ;
There's solace for sorrow—there's comfort for woe,
There's rest for the weary, in Heaven.

Though seasons may vary, and years pass away,
The soul o'er their changes shall soar ;
Shall live, when the beauties of nature decay ;
Shall triumph, when Time is no more.

THE SPIRIT OF POESY.

O, I have been thy lover long,
Soul-soothing Poesy;
And sung to thee each simple song,
With witching eestacy.

Clare.

Come, sweet Enchantress, heavenly maid !

Thy suppliant's call attend ;
In fancy's varied garb array'd,
Fair Poesy, descend !

Thy voice has charm'd in every age,
From Nature's earliest hour ;
Th' untutor'd savage and the sage
Alike confess thy power.

In court, or camp, or hall, or glen,
Thy song can soothe the heart ;
And to the harass'd souls of men,
Consoling joys impart.

Come ! for I love thee, loudly wake
Thy rapture-darting lyre ;
Come ! Inspiration's language take,
And glow with sacred fire.

And hark ! she strikes her silver lute
In harmony again ;
She sings—e'en Discord's sons are mute,
And listen to the strain.

The gay, the grave, the rude, the grand,
The terrible she loves ;
On Alpine heights she takes her stand,
Or in Elysium roves.

When tempests, sweeping o'er the deep,
Creation's face deform,
Her spirit seeks some craggy steep,
And sings amid the storm.

When Glory mounts the victor's car,
And treads the battle plains ;
She chants, amid the fray of war,
Her spirit-rousing strains.

Sometimes, amid the shattered piles
 Of fallen pomp, she strays ;
 She sighs o'er Man's illusive toils,
 As Pity prompts her lays.

Sometimes she seeks the hallow'd tomb,
 Where Valour's hero sleeps ;
 Deplores Ambition's early doom,
 While humbled greatness weeps.

But turning oft from deeds of arms,
 Or Sorrow's mournful trains,
 She tells of love, and beauty's charms,
 Where bright-eyed Pleasure reigns.

Or in some calm, sequestered spot,
 Remote from care and strife,
 She sings, in peasant's lowly cot,
 The joys of rustic life.

And now, Religion's holy theme
 Her highest powers demands ;
 We might her songs, the anthems deem
 Of Archangelic bands.

Sounds so transporting meet our ears,
 Strains so sublime arise ;
That rapt Imagination hears
 Th' hosannas of the skies.

Then, sweet Enchantress, lovely maid !
 Thy suppliant's call attend ;
And now, in fancy's garb array'd,
 Fair Poesy, descend !

KENILWORTH CASTLE.

The cloud-capt towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself;
Yea, all which it inherits shall dissolve,
And, like the baseless fabric of a vision,
Leave not a wreck behind.

Shakespeare.

This once magnificent edifice, which has been rendered famous by the many historical events of which it has been the scene, and an object of interest by the celebrated romance of Kenilworth, from the pen of the Author of Waverley, was built by Geoffrey de Clinton, Chamberlain and Treasurer to King Henry I. It was afterwards beautified, and considerably enlarged by Dudley, Earl of Leicester, in the reign of Elizabeth: and from a copy of a survey, taken during the reign of James I. it appears, that the castle contained within its walls seven acres of ground: that the parks, chaces, and pleasure grounds extended nineteen or twenty miles over a pleasant country; "the like, both for strength, state, and pleasure, not being within the realm of England."—Henry, Prince of Wales, purchased the estate of Sir Robert Dudley, and was succeeded in this property by his brother Charles, who, soon after his accession to the Throne, granted the custody of it to Robert, Earl of Monmouth, Henry, Lord Carey, his eldest son, and Thomas Carey, Esq.; and in their possession it rested till the Commonwealth. During the civil wars, it became a prey to the followers of Cromwell; "by whom it was stripped of its beauty as a residence; its woods

uprooted ; its towers dismantled ; and its lake drained."—"This once splendid structure has become "a mere heap of picturesque desolation:" it now belongs to the Earl of Clarendon, to whose ancestors the ruins and estate were granted by Charles II.

Is this the fain'd castle, which splendour,
 And majesty mark'd for their own ?
 When grandeur and royalty dwelt in its halls,
 And greatness, within its magnificent walls,
 Erected its glorious throne.

Is this the bright spot, which hath witness'd
 The revels of Monarchs and Lords ?
 When valour was held to be honour's best dower,
 And Barons, their ample possessions and power,
 Maintain'd at the point of their swords.

Is this the gay scene, where Eliza
 Once summon'd the pride of her court ?
 When Leicester the pomp of his greatness display'd,
 And Nobles and Beauties, in splendour array'd,
 Repair'd to the festive resort. *

* Alluding to the splendid fete, given at Kenilworth by the Earl of Leicester, to Queen Elizabeth and her Court.

Baronial relic of grandeur !

The day of thy glory hath past :

The stillness of death on thy battlements sleeps,

Around thy dim turrets the wild ivy creeps,

And nods to the sigh of the blast.

No more to the sound of the trumpet,

The Knights of the Tourney advance ;

While crowds of spectators look'd on with surprize,

And beauty rewarded, with victory's prize,

The feats of the sword and the lance.

Destruction hath prey'd on thy beauty ;

And havoc dismantled thy towers ;

Stern ruin around thee exultingly stalks,

Fell carnage and rapine have ravag'd thy walks,

And solitude dwells in thy bowers.

E'en so shall it be with Creation—

The trumpet of Doom's-day shall sound :

The pillars of heaven shall be riven asunder ;

The firmament rock with the loud-pealing thunder :

And earth with its echoes rebound.

O, then, Desolation triumphant,
 Shall witness all nature expire :
The glory of empires for ever decay,
And thrones, dominations, and states pass away,
 Beneath his devastating fire.

ENGLAND, MY COUNTRY.

I love thee, O my native Isle.

Montgomery.

Rejoice, sons of Britain, rejoice,
Glad anthems of gratitude raise,
To Him, whose all-ruling, omnipotent voice,
A boundless Creation obeys.

Time was—when the darkness of error
O'ershadov'd our Isle with its gloom ;
When Tyranny reign'd, and the mandates of terror
Inflicted its merciless doom.

Those ages have past ; they have vanish'd,
Like shadows before the bright sun ;
Religion with joy beheld ignorance banish'd ;
The triumph of Freedom is won.

Britannia struggled—with wonder

Earth view'd her—resistance seem'd vain ;
Like the withs upon Samson her bonds burst asunder,
For Heaven deign'd her cause to sustain.

Yes, ours is a fortunate Isle ;

Prosperity circles our coasts ;
Our hills with the verdure of Lebanon smile ;
Our defence is the Lord God of Hosts.

While War's gory crest has been rear'd,
And Treason's dark banner display'd,
While often in neighbouring realms, has appear'd
Rebellion, with havoc array'd :

O'er England, fair Liberty's home,
The standard of Peace has been waving ;
Unmov'd as a rock 'mid the billowy foam,
She stood, while the whirlwind was raving.

And O, may the storms of Ambition
Ne'er desolate Britain's domains ;
Nor tempests of Discord, nor blasts of Sedition,
Devastate her flourishing plains !

But still from her altars, with joy
 May fires of devotion arise ;
And ne'er may the arm of invasion destroy
 Those comforts, which Englishmen prize.

O Thou, by whose potent decree,
 Kings govern, and Counsellors guide,
Vouchsafe that our Rulers, directed by Thee,
 May ever with justice preside !

With blessings, our Sovereign crown,
 In righteousness stablish his throne ;
With favour, Jehovah ! on Britain look down,
 And never our island disown !

Then, tho' Babylon, opulent nation,
 And Tyre from their summits were hurl'd ;
The Queen of the Ocean shall hold her high station,
 The envy, the pride of the world.



NIGHT.

Again is Night's dim canopy unfurl'd,
The bright-orb'd Moon pursues her radiant march ;
Dull silence hovers o'er a slumbering world ;
And countless stars illumine th' empyreal arch.

How awfully serene the midnight hour !
The busy crowd has settled to repose :
The dungeon slave forgets Oppression's pow'r ;
The man of grief remembers not his woes.

Thus shall it be, when life's brief day is o'er,
And death's long evening spreads its dismal gloom ;
When Virtue's suffering sons shall weep no more,
Nor dark Adversity invade the tomb.

Unheeded then Affliction's tempests sweep ;
Unheeded then the storms of sorrow rave ;
No earthly strife can break that lasting sleep,
Or chase the stillness of the peaceful grave.

In that dread mansion, Fame's obstreperous blast
 Is heard no more ; nor " trumpet-tongued " renown
 Invites the chieftain ; all his toils are past ;
 He pants not, now, for glory's laurel crown.

And what is glory ? 'tis a meteor light,
 Which for a moment sheds a dazzling blaze ;
 Soon—soon its splendour sets in endless night,
 Oblivion's clouds obscure its glittering rays.

But goodness ever lives ; and like the flow'r,
 Which droops at eve, and blossoms to the sun ;
 It fades in death, to flourish at that hour,
 When earth dissolves, and Time's fleet race is run

Soon shall the Morn, attir'd in rosy vest,
 To scatter Night's involving shades appear ;
 The sleeping multitudes forego their rest ;
 And rising Nature smiles of gladness wear :

So when the dawn of an eternal day
 Breaks on the nations ; when amid the roar
 Of mighty thunders, yon bright orbs decay,
 Shall man awake, and wake to sleep no more !

To _____

Earth's a chequer'd scene of sorrow ;
Life's a state of change and woe :
Joy may smile to-day :—to-morrow,
Disappointment's tears may flow.

Lady ! by the tear of sadness,
That bedims thy weeping eye ;
By departed days of gladness,
Thou this truth canst testify.

What, although thy love be slighted,
Shall despairing grief be thine ?
Though thy fondest hopes be blighted ;
Peace may yet upon thee shine.

Though that lovely sun be clouded,
Which so lately shone so bright ;
Though its brilliant beams be shrouded
'Neath the gloom of sorrow's night,

Hope :—and joy's resplendent morning
Soon shall chase these clouds away ;
Soon with bliss-diffusing dawning,
Usher in a happy day.

May the thoughts of vanish'd pleasures
Lead thy views to things above—
To those soul-transporting treasures,
Which no cares can e'er remove.

Then if thou these feelings cherish,
Lady ! will thy lot be blest ;
Though *terrestrial* joys may perish,
Heavenly peace shall calm thy breast.

THE
DESCENT ON SINAI.

The Eternal came down on the wings of the storm ;
The heav'ns bow'd beneath his invisible form ;
And the blast of his chiding was heard through the sky ;
And the universe reel'd at the glance of his eye.

In robes of the whirlwind, and mantle of flame,
To publish his statutes, the Holy One came ;
The clouds of the tempest around him were thrown,
And Judgment and Justice supported his throne.

Earth quak'd at his presence : the mountains were rent ;
Before him, the glory of majesty went ;
A voice from the height of the firmament broke,
In accents of thunder, Omnipotence spoke.

Creation's foundations were moved at his word :—
They shook at the terrible voice of the Lord ;
And the tribes of his chosen ones trembled with awe,
As the Mighty Jehovah establish'd his law.

ASHBY CASTLE.

Imposing must have been the sight,
Ere Desolation found thee.

B. Barton.

To no place, perhaps, has the author of *Waverley* attached a greater degree of interest by his productions, than to the town and neighbourhood of Ashby. Its castle and plains are described as the scene of some of the most animated passages in the romance of *Ivanhoe*, and its celebrated author has admirably displayed his extraordinary talents in his interesting narrative of the chivalrous events, stated to have taken place in its immediate vicinity. We are told that the castle, there mentioned, was not the same building, the stately ruins of which interest the modern traveller; many a generation has passed away since its glory was levelled with the dust. The mutilated piles which are now an object of attraction to the passing stranger, are the remains of a noble mansion, erected in the reign of Edward IV. by Sir William, afterwards Lord Hastings, one of the first victims of the bloody tyranny of Gloucester, afterwards Richard III. In the days of its splendour, this castle was a seat of real old English hospitality; a famous resort of many of the nobles, and even of royalty itself. Of the numerous proud displays of baronial magnificence which have been witnessed within its walls, perhaps the most sumptuous was the entertainment given in celebration of a visit from James I. This structure has also acquired some little notice upon the page of history, as one of the many prisons of the

unfortunate and lovely Mary of Scotland, who was confined within its gloomy towers, when in the custody of the Earl of Huntingdon. In those disastrous times, when rebellion, red with human gore, "cried havoc, and let slip the dogs of war," and exulted in spreading misery and destruction around ; this noble edifice was dismantled by the Parliamentary forces of Cromwell, in 1648. Time has completed what the misguided zeal of party fury began ; and its mouldering relics, now towering forth in the frowning majesty of desolation, serve to convey a good idea of the stately mansions of our ancient barons.

Though proud in strength, Ambition's fabric rears
 Its lofty turrets ; though its dome appears,
 In all th' enduring power of pomp sublime,
 To bid defiance to the blasts of Time ;
 The towering pyramid, the sumptuous hall,
 And Pride's aspiring edifice must fall ;
 The majesty of greatness must decay,
 And all created glory pass away.

As 'midst the stillness of declining day,
 By Ashby's shatter'd castle walls I stray ;
 Of fallen pomp their turrets seem to preach,
 I'd hear the lessons, which these ruins teach.
 Yes, mouldering piles, decaying battlements,
 Which long have brav'd the war of elements,

As on your moss-clad, dim remains I gaze,
 My soul reverts to scenes of former days ;
 And fondly listens to the famous story,
 Which History tells of your departed glory.

Time was—when herè, the noble and the great
 Held court in all the pageantry of state ;
 When feudal barons sway'd dominion's rod,
 And crouching vassals own'd their Chieftain's nod.
 Time was, when here, Devotion's altars blaz'd,
 The holy fathers of the temple rais'd
 Their pious hymns ; these walls have often rung
 With sacred melody, as mass was sung.
 Time was—when to the hoary harper's songs
 These halls re-echoed ; when carousing throngs
 Rais'd clamourous shouts of mirth and revelry,
 As minstrels told the feats of chivalry.
 Time was—when here, amid the dungeon's gloom,
 The lonely captive mourn'd his hapless doom :
 Here, as he dragg'd Oppression's galling chain,
 He sigh'd for home, and home's sweet joys in vain ;
 The scalding tear, which trickled down his cheek,
 Would oft the sorrows of his soul bespeak.

Ages have wrought a change : but Time has been,
 When Ashby's plains were made the festive scene
 Of tilt and tournament ; and " barons bold"
 Were wont their jousts, and festivals to hold.
 Here gallant champions rode : and " ladies bright"
 Beheld their daring deeds with fond delight.
 The trumpets sound—the combatants advance
 In martial pomp—their coursers proudly prance—
 Their lances couched—the shouting heralds cry
 " On to the charge : " with lightning speed they fly
 To deadly strife ; and 'mid the loud acclaim
 Of wondering crowds, they seek the meed of fame.

Here lion-hearted Richard, England's King,
 Would oft the gauntlet of defiance fling ;
 Here Ivanhoe, and many a valiant train
 Of far-fam'd warriors sought the busy plain ;
 Templars—whose plumes had nodded to the breeze
 Of Eastern climes ; whose barks had plow'd the seas
 Of Galilee ; when, at their chief's command,
 They fought the battles of the Holy Land.

Here Robin Hood, and Sherwood's " merry men"
 Have chas'd the deer along the woody glen ;

And wondering rustics heard, at break of morn,
 The clanging echoes of the Outlaw's horn.
 Those scenes, like visions of the night, have fled ;
 Those mighty spirits slumber with the dead :
 Those splendid halls, where majesty was seen,
 Have disappear'd as though they ne'er had been.

Years roll'd away ; and grandeur's sumptuous home
 Again display'd the glory of its dome :
 Its pride hath fallen . Desolation reigns
 In frowning state, amidst its dark remains.

Thou faithful champion of young Edward's throne,
 Ill-fated Hastings ! here thy pomp was shown
 Till mad ambition hurl'd thee to the tomb,
 When Glo'ster gave thee to a traitor's doom.
 From yonder turrets, Scotland's captive queen
 With mournful eye has gaz'd upon the scene ;
 When weary nature sought the couch of sleep,
 The Royal beauty oft would wake to weep ;
 And there unseen by all, save Heav'n, would sigh
 In bitter anguish, o'er her misery.
 Here James has revell'd ; hither pomp has hied
 At pleasure's call, to swell the Monarch's pride :

Here hospitality and mirth would meet
 In joyful bands, the King's approach to greet.
 Proud grandeur's home, and splendour's gay resort,
 Here greatness dwelt, and beauty held her court ;
 Till curs'd Rebellion rais'd her slaughtering brand,
 And rampant ruin stalk'd throughout the land :
 Then Desolation drove his gory car,
 'Midst scenes of carnage, and the shouts of war :
 Destruction's myrmidons exulting strode,
 And flush'd with triumph, on to conquest rode.
 Then, Ashby—then, the storms of vengeance broke
 Around thy battlements ; the spoiler's stroke
 Dash'd down thy towers ; thy majesty defac'd,
 And all the glory of thy might effac'd.
 And now, thy shatter'd piles remain to tell,
 How greatness flourish'd, and how greatness fell.

No more the dance shall through these courts be led,
 Their mirth has ceas'd ; their beauty long has fled :
 No more these aisles the requiem shall prolong ;
 No more shall echo to the minstrel's song.
 Decaying pile ! the voice of joy is mute
 Within thy mansions ; timbrel, harp, and lute
 Are heard no more ; thy merriment has past ;

Thy glory droop'd beneath destruction's blast :
 Death swept away the lovely and the brave ;
 And stillness reigns—the stillness of the grave.
 Thy pomp has perish'd ; weeds o'ertop thy walls,
 And vegetation blooms within thy halls ;
 Amidst thy crumbling stones, the nettle springs,
 And round thy towers, the mantling ivy clings :
 Triumphant ruin here maintains his sway,
 And frowns in all the sternness of decay.

Though o'er this fabric, Desolation reigns,
 Still beauty smiles on Ashby's fertile plains ;
 Here Plenty revels ; gladness chants her strains,
 And jocund Pleasure leads her sprightly trains.

Hither, as to Bethesda's ancient spring,
 When troubled by the Angel's sacred wing,
 The lame and impotent for ease draw near ;
 To yonder Baths, for comfort they repair.
 A healing virtue from their waters flows,
 And health and vigour to the sick bestows.

Long may these blessings o'er the land be shed ;
 Prosperity erect her joyful head ;

Glad Plenty here extend her wide domain,
And Pleasure hold her unmolested reign;
Till earth and all its changing scenes are o'er,
And mutability is known no more.

THE

MUTABILITY OF NATIONAL GLORY.

Empires die.

Young.

The vicissitude to which earthly things are exposed, and the perishable nature of terrestrial glory, are subjects which have claimed the lofty strains of the poet, the subtle reasoning of the philosopher, and the profound attention of the statesman in every age. And indeed, when we take a retrospect of the past, and turn over the ample page of history, “rich with the spoils of time;” when we behold the towering monuments of ambition scattered among the wild bushes of the desert—the once splendid habitations of the mighty crumbling into ruin—the firmest national establishments, and the best labored systems of policy, falling into nothing—

ness ; who can forbear to reflect on the instability of human power, and the mutability of earthly grandeur ?

Time has witnessed the overthrow of monarchies, once celebrated for their wisdom and power : he has seen those nations, where the sciences first dawned which illuminated the world, sinking into comparative insignificance : he has subverted the thrones of empires, and though in some instances he may not have reduced them to utter annihilation, he has wrested the rod of dominion from the hands of their rulers, and (as Macbeth has it) “ has placed a barren sceptre in their gripe.”

Desolation frowns on those plains, where Plenty once bloomed in lovely fertility ; and the whirlwind of destruction has swept away almost every trace of pristine pomp and beauty.

Contemplating the scene of devastation which now presents itself to the exploring eye, and reflecting on the dazzling prospect of glory, which former ages beheld ; the mind of the traveller is affected with surprise, and lost in astonishment ; and as he eyes the mouldering relics of departed greatness, he is ready to exclaim with the Poet—

Is this the scene so desolate and wild,
 Where noblest arts in bright perfection smiled ?
 Where Commerce emptied all her richest stores,
 The nameless treasures of a thousand shores ?
 Is this the scene where Freedom's purest flame,
 Led toiling nations in the path of fame ?
 Their strife has ceased ; their noise has past away ;
 Their very tombs are sinking in decay ;
 The sculptured monument, the marble bust
 Descend and mingle with their native dust. *

In illustrating my remarks, it is not my intention to enter into a detail of those causes, to which politicians are apt to ascribe the decline of empires ; I shall content myself with exemplifying my observations, by contrasting the accounts which historians have given of their ancient splendour, with the testimony of modern travellers, as to their present desolate situation.

Among the many nations, which once seemed to bid defiance to the shocks of time, and to glory in the prospect of eternal duration, Babylon, the proud metropolis of the Assyrian empire, claimed a pre-eminence : durability appeared to be inscribed upon her lofty towers ;

* Palmyra, a prize poem by J. H. Bright, of St. John's College, Cambridge.

and immutability stamped upon her mighty fabrics.* Situated on a plain of vast extent, and bisected by the noble river Euphrates, the city is represented by Herodotus to have been a perfect square, inclosed by a wall, four hundred and eighty furlongs, or sixty British miles in circumference. This account of its immensity at first sight may almost stagger belief: but our surprise is in some degree weakened, when we consider that the wall, which now protects China from the invasions of the Tartars, “is forty-five feet high, and eighteen feet thick; and extends for the space of one thousand five hundred miles, over mountains of the steepest altitude, and through vallies of the profoundest depth.” Again, when we reflect that Seleucia, founded by Seleucus Nicator, about three hundred years B. C.: Ctesiphon, by Nushirvan in the sixth century: Hellah, a town erected in the tenth century; and the modern cities of Bagdad and Bassora, were all partly built of materials, brought from the ruins of Babylon: our scepticism is partially removed; and we are disposed to receive more favourably those historical accounts which might otherwise appear incredible.

* The principal authorities I have consulted, in the following account of Babylon, are Dean Prideaux, Mr. Rich's memoir, and the Rev. T. Maurice's remarks on that memoir.

“ Whatever may have been the size of Babylon, I imagine,” says Mr. Rich in his memoir, “ that its population bore no proportion to it ; and that it would convey to a modern, the idea of an inclosed district, rather than that of a regular city ; the streets, which led from gate to gate across the area, being no more than roads through cultivated land, over which buildings were distributed in groups or patches.” “ Quintus Curtius says, that there was pasture and arable land in the inclosure, sufficient to support the population during a long siege.” “ Xenophon reports, that when Cyrus took Babylon (which event happened in the night), the inhabitants of the opposite quarter of the town were not aware of it, till three hours after sun-rise ; probably owing to the great distance of one cluster of houses from another.”

At certain regular distances on its stupendous walls, watch towers were erected, and each side of the square, inclosing the city, was adorned with twenty-five gates of solid brass ; from each of which a street, fifteen miles long, ran across the city ; which was thus by the crossing of its fifty streets, cut into squares, four furlongs and a half on every side, two miles and a quarter in compass. In the centre of each of the grand divisions of the city,

formed by the flowing of the Euphrates from North to South, a public fabric was erected. In the eastern division, stood the temple of Belus, upon whose shrine, the costly sacrifices of the Chaldean sages were continually burning. This wonderful structure was a square pile, on each side of the extent of two furlongs ; the tower erected in its centre was a furlong in breadth, and as much in height ; and on this as a base, seven other lofty towers were raised in regular succession ; and the whole was crowned, according to Diodorus, with a brazen statue of the God Belus, forty feet high.

Ancient and modern authors support the hypothesis, that the high tower, in the centre of the area of this temple, was the tower of Babel, or at least the remains of that astonishing structure. “ It was personally visited,” says the writer before cited, “ in its decaying grandeur, after it had been plundered and defaced by Xerxes, by Herodotus four hundred years before the Christian æra.” “ It was viewed with astonishment, even in that decayed state, by the captains of Alexander, who designed to restore it to its former splendour ; but Strabo, on a survey of these ruins, affirms that ten thousand men would not be able in two months to have removed even the rubbish ; and

Alexander's subsequent death put an end to the project." " Sir Walter Raleigh, in his history of the world, cites an obsolete author, to prove that the tower in question was forty-six years in building, which, as he observes, to make sound foundations for such a pile, in the low and marshy plains of Shinar, seemed requisite."

In the grand western division of the city, the royal palace, intended also as a citadel, reared its lofty and well-fortified turrets. This splendid edifice was erected on an area, a mile and a half square, and was surrounded with three vast circular walls, which were ornamented with sculptured animals, resembling life, richly painted in their natural colours, on the bricks of which they were composed, and afterwards burnt in. This princely mansion had often witnessed the magnificent display of Assyrian greatness; and here, amidst the glare of royalty, the pomp of power, the revelry of mirth, and the blandishments of beauty, the impious Belshazzar was holding his festive court, when the mysterious hand-writing, on the palace wall, proclaimed the approaching downfall of his glory.

Such was the mighty Babylon; faint and imperfect

indeed is the sketch, but it may serve to convey some idea of the magnitude and splendour of that once superb metropolis.

O thou vast Babylon ! what mighty hand
 Created thee, and spread thee o'er the plain,
 Capacious as a world ; and girt thee round
 With high-tower'd walls, and bound thy gates with brass ;
 And taught th' indignant river to endure
 Thy bridge of cedar and of palm, high hung
 Upon its marble piers ? What voice proclaim'd,
 Amid the silence of the sands, " Arise,
 And be earth's wonder ?"

Milman.

Not only are our astonishment and admiration excited by the consideration of Babylon's splendour ; the scientific advancement of its inhabitants has some claim upon our notice. Chaldea was the cradle, if I may so speak, in which the infant science of Astronomy was nursed. Here, soaring on the eagle wings of contemplation, these sages of antiquity were wont to read the mystic language of the skies ; and as a proof of their progress in this sublime study, it may be mentioned, that Pythagoras, the celebrated Grecian philosopher, " learned arithmetic from the Phenicians ; theology from the Persians ; geometry from the Egyptians ; and astronomy from the Chaldeans."

This is far from being the only science in which this eminent people excelled ; for the Rev. T. Maurice remarks, that the paintings with which the walls of their palaces and other splendid edifices were ornamented, may be considered as nearly the earliest specimen of enamelling on record. Indeed it was scarcely possible, as the Rev. author observes, for a nation so well practised in the burning of bricks, even to a vitreous hardness, to have been ignorant of this art ; and that they could also engrave upon them, is evident from the characters sculptured upon those that have been dug up and brought to Europe ; many of which are preserved in the British Museum. Of their skill in the fabrication of images, and their advance in metallurgic science, the hundred gates of brass, with which the city was fortified, and the golden statues and utensils, that ornamented the temple of Belus, are sufficient proofs. It must also be evident, that they were intimately acquainted with chemistry ; which their extreme devotion to fire worship promoted in all its branches. It may be further remarked, that they attained to a great proficiency in imprinting argillaceous and other substances with colours ; and their country abounded with the richest materials, from which might be extracted the most beautiful dyes. In confirmation of this, we are told,

that when Alexander took Susa, he found five thousand quintals of Hermione purple, the colour of which was as fresh and beautiful as if just come from the dyer ; although they had been hoarded by Persian sovereigns, for the space of one hundred and ninety years. The splendour of their vestments was indeed proverbial among the ancients ; and when Cato was presented with a Babylonish garment, he refused to accept it ; alleging that it was too superb for a philosopher.

From the few foregoing observations, it must be clearly demonstrated, that the Babylonians were indeed a wonderful people. Yet Babylon has fallen ! the boast of nations—the mother of kingdoms—“the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency” is now no more ; the wasting hand of decay has dashed down her once splendid palaces ; the fires of destruction have scathed her aspiring turrets ; and the ploughshare of desolation has levelled her with the dust !

Upwards of two thousand years have rolled away, since the victorious Cyrus gave the death-blow to the Assyrian dynasty. Upon the subsequent transferring of the seat of government to Susa, the embankment, which

confined the Euphrates to its channel, was suffered to fall into decay ; and as that mighty river annually overflowed its banks, during the Summer solstice, owing to the melting of the snow on the mountains of Armenia, all the flat country of Mesopotamia and Babylonia was inundated by its torrents ; consequently, when the erection which restrained its current in passing through the city, was broken down, its impetuous streams swept away many of the buildings, and converted the once habitable plain into one vast morass.

This may, in some degree, account for the difficulty which geographers encounter, in ascertaining the site of many of its considerable edifices. Of those stupendous walls, which were once numbered among the wonders of the world, we are assured by the testimony of various travellers, not a single vestige is to be perceived. Of its far-famed hanging gardens, not a trace is to be seen ; if we except one solitary tree, called by the natives *Athelè*, somewhat resembling *lignum vitæ*, which, Mr. Rich informs us, is asserted to have flourished in ancient Babylon.

So completely has the work of havoc been carried on, that we might imagine the Angel of Desolation had here

resolved to exhibit the most convincing proof of the instability of earthly power, and the mutability of national glory. The modern traveller now contemplates that desolate scene, which was revealed to the seer of Israel, when, standing on the mountains of prophecy, and looking forward through the misty valley of time, he beheld the mighty walls of Babylon shaken to their foundations, and the fertile plains of Assyria, swept “with the besom of destruction.” Her marts of commerce, and halls of joy have become “a possession of the bittern, and pools of water;” the beasts of the desert revel unmolested among the relics of her gorgeous palaces; and a few gigantic heaps of blackening ruins remain to mark the spot, where Babylon once displayed her pomp, to the admiring gaze of surrounding nations.

From the mouldering remains of Babylonian splendour, we will now direct our attention to the desolate summits of a city, no less renowned, the once opulent Tyre. Situated on a small peninsula, on the coast of Phœnicia, by industry and commerce (“those never failing fountains, from which wealth can alone be taught to flow”) this celebrated city, in an early age of the world, raised itself to a proud pre-eminence among the nations, and in

the zenith of its glory, contained the most flourishing, opulent, and powerful people in the universe. So just and animated is the description, which the elegant author of *Telemachus* puts into the mouth of his hero, that no apology need be required to justify its quotation. “ I was detained,” says he, “ at Tyre, a considerable time by contrary winds. During this interval, I acquainted myself with the manners of the Phœnicians ; a people that were become famous through all the known world. I admired the situation of their city, which is built upon an island in the midst of the sea. The neighbouring coast is rendered extremely delightful, by its uncommon fertility, the exquisite flavour of its fruits, the number of towns and villages, which are almost contiguous to each other, and the excellent temperature of the climate ; it is sheltered by a ridge of mountains, from the burning winds that pass over the southern continent ; and refreshed by the northern breezes that flow from the sea. It is situated at the foot of Libanus, whose head is concealed within the clouds, and hoary with everlasting frost. Torrents of water, mingled with snow, rush from the craggy precipices that surround it ; and at a small distance below, is a vast forest of cedars, which appear to be as

ancient, as the earth, and almost as lofty as the sky. The declivity of the mountain below the forest, is covered with pasture, where innumerable cattle and sheep are continually feeding, among a thousand rivulets of the purest water ; and at the foot of the mountain, below the pastures, the plain has the appearance of a garden, where Spring and Autumn seem to unite their influence, to produce at once both flowers and fruit ; which are never parched by the pestilential heat of the southern blast, nor blighted by the piercing cold of the northern tempest. Near this delightful coast, the island on which Tyre is built, emerges from the sea. The city seems to float upon the waters ; and looks like the sovereign of the deep. It is crowded with merchants of every nation, and its inhabitants are themselves the most eminent merchants in the world." Such is the poetic account given by the son of Ulysses of this highly prosperous nation.

The Tyrians are represented to have been an ingenious, persevering, and laborious race ; possessing great manual dexterity, and remarkable for temperance and frugality..

History informs us, that the invention of navigation was the peculiar glory of their country ; that this was the daring people who,

—— “ first essayed the deep,

“ And wafted merchandise to realms unknown.”

They must indeed have been expert mariners at a very early period of time; for one thousand years B.C. we find them employed by the Israelitish monarch, in conveying their produce to Jerusalem, to afford materials for the building of the temple. By the extension of their commerce, they arrived at empire ; their city became the grand emporium of nations: the mart, where innumerable kingdoms displayed their costly wares; and the naval banner of the Tyrians was unfurled, far as the then known billows of the deep could bear along their richly freighted vessels.

Notwithstanding her fertility; notwithstanding her maritime power; notwithstanding that rich abundance of treasures, which caused it to be figuratively said of her, that “ she heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets;” notwithstanding her unparalleled commercial greatness; the Almighty declared of her by

his prophet Ezekiel ; “ They shall make a spoil of thy riches, and make a prey of thy merchandise : and they shall break down thy walls, and destroy thy pleasant houses ; and they shall lay thy stones, and thy timber, and thy dust in the midst of the water.—And I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease ; and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard.—And I will make thee like the top of a rock : thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon : thou shalt be built no more : for I the Lord, have spoken it, saith the Lord God.”

The woe-denouncing prediction has been literally fulfilled ; and Tyre has been destined to swell the catalogue of those kingdoms, which have afforded striking memorials of the frailty of national prosperity. After sustaining a siege of thirteen years, she was conquered by the Assyrian king, the ambitious Nebuchadnezzar ; but she afterwards recovered her ancient trade and grandeur. Again was she desolated by the invading troops of a victorious Alexander, and again she partially raised herself from the ruins of her fall. She was taken by the Saracens in A. D. 639 ; was recovered by the Christian Crusaders in 1124 ; was conquered by the Mamelukes

of Egypt, under their Sultan, Alphix, in 1289; and was finally taken from them by Selim, the ninth Emperor of the Turks, in 1516.*

Since that time, she has fallen into utter decay; a few miserable cabins, the residence of poor fishermen, are the only vestiges of human habitations, which mark the site of that crowning city, “whose merchants were princes, and whose traffickers were the honourable of the earth.”

View

The dust of Carthage; desert shores of Nile;
 Or Tyre's abandon'd summits, crown'd of old
 With stately towers; whose merchants, from their isles,
 And radiant thrones, assembled in her marts;
 Whither Arabia, whither Kedar brought
 Their shaggy goats, their flocks and bleating lambs;
 Where rich Damascus pil'd his fleeces white,
 Prepar'd, and thirsty for the double tint,
 And flowering shuttle. While th' admiring world
 Crowded her streets: ah! then the hand of Pride
 Sow'd imperceptible his poisonous weed,
 Which crept destructive up her lofty domes,
 As ivy creeps around the graceful trunk
 Of some tall oak. Her lofty domes no more,
 Not e'en the ruins of her pomp remain;
 Not e'en the dust they sunk in, by the breath

* It may be here objected, that I have not sufficiently distinguished between insular and continental Tyre; for a full explanation of this point, I would refer my readers to Newton's excellent work upon the Prophecies.

Of the Omnipotent, offended, hurl'd
 Down to the bottom of the stormy deep :
 Only the solitary rock remains,
 Her ancient site ; a monument to those,
 Who toil and wealth exchange for sloth and pride.

Dyer.

From the sea-beaten rocks of fallen Tyre, let us now turn the eye of contemplation to the immortal "Seven-hill'd city," and gaze in imagination upon the decaying remains of greatness, which meet the view,

"Where Rome's vast ruins darken Tyber's waves."

It would be superfluous to attempt, in this essay, to trace the rise and progress of that mighty nation, which once instructed mankind by its wisdom, and swayed the sceptre of almost universal dominion : volumes have been written upon the subject by the most able historians, and the glories of its state have been the theme of the poet and the philosopher in every age. There is something, however, in the very mention of Rome, which calls forth a sublime association of ideas ; her dust appears to be consecrated by the most classical recollections of antiquity : and the sound of her name, like the potent call of a magician, seems to conjure up the spirits of the departed, and the renowned of former days start into imaginary existence.

“Forgotten generations live again.”

“Mutius Scævola, and his burning hand ; Clælia, and her aquatic venture ; Virginius, and his ferocious independence ; Quintus Curtius, and his headlong leap ;” Regulus, and his patriotic disinterestedness ; Cato, and his stoical sternness ; Pompey, and his dastardly assassination ; Cæsar, and his innumerable laurels ; Brutus, and his avenging dagger ; Antony, and his inglorious death ; Cicero, and his persuasive eloquence ; Virgil, and his majestic lyre ; all crowd upon the imagination, and seem to realize the dreams of antiquarian research.

In the reveries of fancy, we behold admiring multitudes listening to the melodious harpings of their bards ; or hanging enraptured upon the glowing harangues of those master spirits, who were wont,

“Th’ applause of list’ning senates to command.”

We see their valiant bands, marching forth to the field of conflict, and unsheathing their swords at the sacred cry of Liberty ; or returning from her warlike expeditions, we view them crowned with the garlands of victory, passing through their streets amidst the salutations of the citizens, in all the pomp of martial splendour ; while the spoils of

conquered nations and subjugated monarchs graced their triumphal processions. These splendid scenes have long since passed away ; and the mighty actors of them have long since retired from the great theatre of human life.

“ They live but in the tales of other times : ”

The lofty strains of their poets have died away : their orators have long been mute ; their formidable legions no longer unfurl those banners, which the bird of conquest so often delighted to follow ; the sword of victory has fallen from the grasp of their warriors, and has mouldered into dust with the tombs of their heroes ; the illustrious line of demi-gods, who dignified their country, has ceased to exist ; the sceptre of their rulers is broken ; and the throne of their glory is demolished.

“ Nothing in Rome,” says a recent visitor of the spot,* “ re-calls the days of her barbarous freedom, or splendid independence. The great majority of nameless, formless piles, dignified with the epithet of remains, are in fact the ruins of ruins—the remnant of repeated desolations, and incessant injury. Even sites have changed their aspects. The paradise of Latium (the Latium of

* Lady Morgan.

Virgil and of Pliny) is an infected desert. Lavinium is the tomb of its famished inhabitants; and the port of Ostium a nest of pestilential caverns, the dens of galley slaves, and the asylum of murderers. The Capitol, from Virgil to the last-learned school-boy, has been a theme of description, of wonder, and reminiscence; and never fails to present images of stupendous edifices, inaccessible precipices, of an immense and elevated space, covered with fortresses, temples, oracular fanes, and glittering shrines, triumphal arches, and deified statues. Yet the site of all these miracles, of the Temple of Jupiter, with its hundred steps and hundred pillars, rich with the plunder of a world, the throne of the Thunderer, the accumulated produce of power, wealth, and art, is scarcely larger than the usual space allotted for the lantern-house and dusty garden of a London citizen." Of those haunts of the Graces and Muses, where Horace sang, and Virgil tuned his lyre, we are told by the same writer, "not a wreck remains." The Esquiline hill is dreary and uninhabited. A monk hurrying home to his convent, or a wretch emaciated by disease, begging on the road-side, are all the traces of humanity or life, which animate the desert, where Lydia may have loitered with

Horace in bowers, which promised to be as immortal as their loves."

It would be foreign to the purport of this essay, and a task to which I confess myself utterly inadequate, to enter into a description of the various relics of antiquity to be found at Rome. Among other decaying monuments of power, which now stand forth in all the majesty of desolation, the Arch of Titus is eminently conspicuous. Erected in commemoration of that conquest, when the walls of the Holy City were razed to their foundations, and the triumphant banners of Pagan Rome floated on the smoking ruins of the Temple of the Most High; it still remains, a memento of the fulfilment of prophecy, and of the present dependent state of the scattered tribes of Israel.

The Mamertine prison, with its horrid dungeons, the scene of so many barbarous tragedies, is still in existence; and the mind of the beholder recoils with awe, as he thinks of the bloody deeds which have been acted within its gloomy precincts. Here the son of freedom has often fallen by the axe of despotism; and the hero of many battles has been immolated on the altar of revengeful

ambition : here the persecuted martyr has often attested his belief in the truth of his creed, by his blood ; here the last incarceration of St. Peter took place ; and it was from this den of horrors, that the intrepid champion of Christianity, the great Apostle of the Gentiles, St. Paul was led forth, to swell the list of those hapless victims, who were sacrificed by the detested Nero.

In the wide sweep of splendid ruins in the vicinity of the Roman Forum, there is one mouldering fabric, “ great above all, and beautiful as great.” This is the Coliseum ; which, as the authoress before quoted has eloquently observed, “ is the last and noblest monument of Roman grandeur, and Roman crime ; erected by the sweat and labour of millions of captives, for the purpose of giving the last touch of degradation to a people, whose flagging spirit, policy sought to re-place by brutal ferocity. The first day’s games in this sumptuous butchery, cost the nation eleven millions of gold. The blood of five thousand animals bathed its arena. Man, and his natural enemy, the beast of the desert, the conqueror and the conquered writhed in agony together on its ensanguined floor ; and eighty-seven thousand spectators raised their horrid plaudits, while captive warriors were slain,

“To make a Roman holiday.”

“ This unrivalled edifice,” says the same writer, “ has been, since the period of its destination, the scene of many strange events ; the fortress of the free ; the citadel of the despotic ; the scaffold of the martyr ; the stage of the buffoon ; the asylum of the assassin ; the shrine of the devout ; and the rendezvous of the dissipated and the gay, from all parts of the world.”

Without pausing to dwell upon the Pantheon, the Vatican, and other monuments of ancient greatness, I shall conclude my remarks upon a nation (which Goldsmith says, rose by temperance, and fell by luxury) with a passage from that great master of poetical description, Lord Byron :—

O Rome, my country, city of my soul !
 The orphans of the heart must turn to thee,
 Lone mother of dead empires, and control
 In their shut breasts, their petty misery.
 What are our woes and sufferance ? Come and see
 The cypress, hear the owl, and plod your way,
 O'er steps of broken thrones and temples. Ye,
 Whose agonies are evils of a day,
 A world is at our feet, as fragile as our clay.

The Niobe of nations ! there she stands,
 Childless and crownless, in her voiceless woe ;
 An empty urn within her wither'd hands,
 Whose holy dust was scattered long ago :

The Scipios' tomb contains no ashes now,
 The very sepulchres lie tenantless
 Of their heroic dwellers; dost thou flow,
 Old Tiber, through a marble wilderness?
 Rise, with thy yellow waves, and mantle her distress.

The Goth, the Christian, Time, War, Flood, and Fire,
 Have dealt upon the seven-hill'd city's pride;
 She saw her glories, star by star expire,
 And up the steep, barbarian monarchs ride,
 Where the car climb'd the capitol; far and wide,
 Temple and tower went down, nor left a site;
 Chaos of ruins! who shall trace the void,
 O'er the dim fragments cast a lunar light,
 And say, "here was or is," where all is doubly night?

Did the subject require further illustration, I might dwell on the destruction of a Carthage and a Troy; I might allude to the overthrow of a Nineveh; I might contemplate the desolation of Jerusalem; I might descant on the faded glories of Greece; and learn the lessons of vicissitude among the shattered piles of Palmyra. But enough, I think, has been said to show the revolutions to which even empires are subject, and the mutability of national glory. We have seen the insufficiency of pomp, of splendour, and of high scientific advancement, to secure a Babylon from decay; we have seen the most prosperous state of commercial greatness unable to avert the ruin of a Tyre; and we have seen Rome, the mighty empress of

the earth, though once exalted to so lofty a pinnacle of power, as almost to defy the storms of desolation, hurled from her imperial throne, and falling beneath the arm of the destroyer.

These monarchies existed for a while in the full vigour of prosperity, and the plenitude of greatness; ages rolled away; and they languished with weakness; the worm of consumption (if I may be allowed the metaphorical expression) fastened on their vitals; they agonized in the convulsions of expiring glory; till exhausted by frequent attacks, and enervated by increasing debility, they were as unable to bear up against the fatal progress of decline, as man to avert the stroke of death.

From the wreck of nations and the crush of states, which we have been contemplating, it may not be altogether irrelevant to turn our attention to a country, which, like her native rocks amidst the tempests of the deep, has stood firm and immoveable, amidst the shocks which have agitated empires, and swept even kingdoms from their base—a country, which has risen from the most degraded state of heathen barbarity to a high refinement of civilization; a country, celebrated for arms, arts, and commerce,

and whose greatness has called forth the envy and admiration of other nations. Need I say, that the country, to which I allude, is the land of our birth? that it is, to use Shakespeare's glowing language—

This royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle,
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-paradise,
This fortress, built by Nature for herself,
Against infection and the hand of war,
This happy breed of men, this little world,
England, bound in with the triumphant sea,
Whose rocky shore beats back the envious siege
Of watery Neptune.

But while we with true patriotic feeling exult in the prosperity of Britain, history points to the annals of the past, and seems to remind us of the uncertain duration of national glory.

Far be it from me to prognosticate, what Heaven grant, may never take place, the decline of Britain's greatness :—

“ For why should we seek to anticipate sorrow,
By throwing the flowers of the present away ;
Or gather the black rolling clouds of to-morrow,
To darken the generous sun of to-day ? ”

But the probability of the assumption has, I think, been fairly shown, by him, whose precocious talents have shed a halo of literary glory round the name of Nottingham; the lamented K. White. After noticing the instability of earthly things, the vanity of human expectations, and briefly alluding to the ruin of empires, he turns his eye upon England, and carrying forward his views to future ages, he sees her in imagination falling before the scythe of desolation, and glowing with all the fervour of poetic enthusiasm, he exclaims—

Where now is Britain? Where her laurell'd name,
 Her palaces and halls? Dash'd in the dust.
 Some second Vandal hath reduc'd her pride,
 And with one big recoil hath thrown her back
 To primitive barbarity.—Again,
 Through her depopulated vales, the scream
 Of bloody Superstition hollow rings;
 And the scared native to the tempest howls
 The yell of deprecation.—O'er her marts,
 Her crowded ports, broods Silence, and the cry
 Of the low curlew, and the pensive dash
 Of distant billows, breaks alone the void.
 Even as the savage sits upon the stone,
 That marks where stood her capitols, and hears
 The bittern booming in the weeds, he shrinks
 From the dismaying solitude.—Her bards
 Sing in a language that hath perished,
 And their wild harps, suspended o'er their graves,
 Sigh to the desert winds a dying strain.

Such is the gloomy picture which presented itself to the eye of the poet, a fiction of fancy, which, I trust, future ages will never see realized.

“Grim-visaged war hath smoothed his wrinkled front ;” Peace with a lavish hand has scattered her blessings around ; Commerce has poured forth its wealthy stores ; and (to borrow a figure from the Sketch Book) Literature has “gone forth into the highways and thoroughfares of life ; has planted bowers by the way-side for the refreshment of the pilgrim and sojourner ; and has established pure fountains, where the labouring man may turn aside from the dust and heat of the day, and drink of the living streams of knowledge.”

Long may these blessings be experienced by our favoured land ; long may we have cause to exult in Britain’s prosperity ; and may the edifice of her national glory be erected on so stable a foundation, as to defy the wildest storms of mutability, and be co-existent with Creation itself !



AMBITION.

How idle a boast after all is the immortality of a name ! Time is ever silently turning over his pages ; we are too much engrossed by the story of the present, to think of the characters and anecdotes that gave interest to the past ; and each age is a volume thrown aside to be speedily forgotten. The idol of to-day pushes the hero of yesterday out of our recollection ; and will, in turn, be supplanted by his successor to-morrow.—“ Our fathers,” says Sir Thos. Brown, “ find their graves in our short memories, and sadly tell us how we may be buried in our survivors.”—History fades into fable ; fact becomes clouded with doubt and controversy ; the inscription moulders from the tablet ; the statue falls from the pedestal. Columns, arches, pyramids, what are they but heaps of sand ; and their epitaphs, but characters written in the dust ? What is the security of a tomb, or the perpetuity of an embalment ? The remains of Alexander the Great have been scattered to the wind, and his empty sarcophagus is now the mere curiosity of a museum.

* * * * *

Thus man passes away ; his name perishes from record and recollection ; his history is as a tale that is told, and his very monument becomes a ruin.

The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon.

Notwithstanding the lectures which history and experience are continually reading on the vanity of earthly fame, the inconstancy of popular applause, and the un-

satisfying nature of worldly advancement ; there are characters, who are ever willing to sacrifice bodily ease and mental repose on the shrine of an inordinate ambition. Animated by a love of glory—a desire of conquest, or the prospect of a fancied immortality ; they deem no difficulties too formidable to encounter—no obstacles too insuperable to surmount. A thirst for military renown has led thousands to barter their happiness for the attainment of a title among men, or the blood-stained chaplet of the hero. We have seen the mighty ones of the earth marching to empire through the slaughtered hosts of millions of their fellow-creatures ; devastation and terror have marked their course ; the conflagration of blazing cities has illuminated their path ; the groans of the dying, and the agonizing cries of despair have resounded through their tents ; and the sorrows of the fatherless and the widow have served but as further excitements to the prosecution of their desolating progress. They unsheathe the sword of invasion ; peace and joy retreat before their hated approach ; cultivation withers before their blasting presence ; they hesitate not to revel among the miseries of nations ; and for what ? To acquire a little posthumous reputation, a robe of purple, or a diadem of honour :—a reputation, which must shortly be effaced from human

recollection ; a diadem, which must speedily be snatched from the brow of its elevated wearer.

How often has the light, which illumines the path of the ambitious, with the vivid, though transient blaze of the meteor, proved a light which shone to bewilder and lured to betray ! How often has the mildew of envy or the cankerworm of disappointment blighted those laurels, which their fond possessor imagined would bloom with almost unfading verdure ! Of the numbers who have set out with eager hope in pursuit of the “bubble reputation,” or sought to hew their way to a throne of extended dominion, how many have failed of attaining the promised good ; how many have been unexpectedly stopped in their ardent career ; how many have been destined to “sow the wind, and reap the whirlwind ;” to prove, by their experience, that vicissitude is the lot of mortals ; and that the monuments, which ambition would erect upon the sliding sand of popular applause, are but little calculated to withstand the stormy blasts of desolation !

Supposing that fortune smiles on their endeavours ; that they reach the lofty summit of their wishes, the proud pinnacle of human glory ; are not care and anxiety their

inseparable companions? Mistrust, suspicion, and fear their unavoidable attendants? The successful arms of a rival may deprive them of their authority; or should they be permitted to enjoy their hard-earned honours in tranquillity, Death soon strips them of their temporary grandeur, and teaches them the important truth, that

“ A little rule, a little sway,
A sunbeam in a Winter’s day,
Is all the great and mighty have,
Between the cradle and the grave.”

It is true; orators may extol their achievements; poets may celebrate their deeds; and posterity may award their monumental statues a niche in the temple of Fame.

“ Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honour’s voice provoke the silent dust?
Or Flattery sooth the dull, cold ear of death?”

The praises of the multitude startle not the tenants of the tomb; the thunders of popular applause disturb not the unbroken stillness of that last retreat. Could the departed heroes of antiquity rise from their sepulchres; could the spirits of the mighty, who once swayed the fate of nations, start from their mouldering cemeteries; me-

thinks that with united voice, they would proclaim ambition, vanity ; fame, a delusion ; and honour, a perplexing vision.

In the beautiful lines of the devout poet of the night,

“ The melancholy ghosts of dead renown,
Whisp’ring faint echoes of the world’s applause,
With penitential aspect, as they pass,
All point at earth, and hiss at human pride.
The wisdom of the wise, and prancings of the great.”

In consulting the biographical records of the past, history bears ample testimony to the truth of these observations. The celebrated Miltiades, after achieving, upon the plains of Marathon, one of the most splendid victories which Greece could boast, was doomed to receive a most mortifying proof of the fickleness of popularity, in the base ingratitude of the Athenians ; and actually terminated his existence within the walls of a prison. Pausanias, the valiant Lacedemonian, after signally defeating three hundred thousand of the Persians with an army of seventy thousand Greeks, in the memorable battle of Plataea ; after desolating the island of Cyprus, in conjunction with Aristides and Cimon ; taking possession of the city of Byzantium, and returning home laden with the plunder of

the vanquished ; to further his own aspiring projects, basely offered to deliver up Sparta to Xerxes ; and as the penalty of his ambition, literally expired of cold and hunger in the temple of Minerva, where he had taken refuge from the fury of his countrymen. Manlius, whose determinate bravery was rewarded by the grateful liberality of his country, not content with receiving the honourable meed of his courage, aspired to the sovereignty of Rome ; his ambitious designs were frustrated ; and as an expiation for his offence, he was condemned to be thrown headlong down the Tarpeian Rock. The theatre of his glory became the scene of his infamy ; and he died the death of a traitor in sight of that very Capitol, which his valour had saved. Hannibal, the renowned Carthaginian general, whose matchless exploits were the admiration of his cotemporaries, whose military fame carried terror into the camps of his foes, after conquering Spain, and retaining possession of Italy for sixteen years against the power of the Romans, was at last totally defeated by Scipio at Zama ; became an outcast and a wanderer from the nation which he had so faithfully served ; was reduced to the humiliating condition of throwing himself upon the clemency of foreign princes ; and in the court of the Bithynian king, closed his chequered career by swallow-

ing poison, to escape the swords of his implacable enemies.

Passing over the tragical fates of a Cyrus and a Philip, we have a striking instance of the vanity, the unsatisfying nature of ambition, in the life of Alexander the Great; of him, who sounded the war-whoop of desolation throughout the most flourishing and extended provinces; who beheld the numerous and powerful hosts of Asia Minor, Egypt, Media, Syria, and Persia, conquered by his invincible armies;

“ Who the tiara at his pleasure tore
From kings of all the then discover'd globe !
And cried, forsooth, because his arm was hamper'd,
And had not room enough to do its work.”

So inflated was he with the success which attended his designs, that he openly aspired to the character of an immortal, and pretended to establish his claim to divinity: so little did he hesitate to carry on the work of destruction, that he fired the palace of Persepolis at the instigation of one of his concubines. After ravaging the most fertile kingdoms, and subjugating the most powerful empires, he sighed for other worlds to conquer and to ruin; but the boasted son of Jupiter Ammon, had no power to

arrest the arm of Death ; no shield to defend him from *his* dart ; at a time, when he was indulging dreams of future glory, when he was meditating new projects of ambition, and seeking to extend still further the bounds of his dominion, he was prematurely cut off in the flower of his age, by a fever, the effect of excessive intemperance.

The lessons of disappointed hope and blighted expectations may be further learned at the funeral pile of a Pompey, or the tomb of an assassinated Cæsar. Pompey, after leading to conquest some of the bravest of the Roman troops, and acquiring the most splendid military renown, was vanquished in the battle of Pharsalia, and fled for protection to Ptolemy, king of Egypt, by whose command he was treacherously murdered. His headless body was thrown naked on the sea-shore ; his faithful freed-man, and a veteran, who had fought under his banners, were the only persons who performed the last sad obsequies of this skilful commander. Cæsar, the greatest warrior of his day—he, who saw

* Mankind grow thin by his destructive sword,"

prosecuted his ambitious schemes with such vigour, and gratified his insatiable desire of conquest to such an

extent, that he fought against three millions of enemies during his many campaigns ; made one million prisoners ; strewed the field of battle, and choked the lakes and rivers of the countries through which he passed, with above a million of the slain ; took by assault above eight hundred towns, and triumphed over three hundred nations. After gaining these unprecedented victories, he arrived at the highest honours of the state : he was created perpetual Dictator ; and at a time, when the sun of his glory appeared to have reached its meridian ; when, crowned with the laurels of fame, he was reaping the reward of his valour ; while his active mind was conceiving mightier designs, and his ardent spirit was panting after more unlimited authority, a conspiracy was formed against him ; and this conqueror of conquerors fell by the dagger of Brutus, his most intimate friend.

Turning from the classic pages of antiquity to the history of our own country, we meet with a remarkable example of " vaulting ambition," in the character of Richard the Third. This consummate hypocrite and blood-thirsty tyrant scrupled not to violate the sacred rights of justice and humanity, to further his guilty projects ; fraud, cruelty, and murder, were the instruments

which he employed to obtain possession of the English Throne. Scarcely, however, had he grasped the sceptre of royalty, ere the unwelcome intelligence of Richmond's approach, called upon him to defend his crown by the sword. He assembled his forces at Nottingham, and thence marched to the field of Bosworth, where the contending armies met; a rencontre ensued; Richard was stretched lifeless on the plain, and victory decided in favour of his rival.

An Alexander and a Cæsar were both formed to be the wonder of the age in which they lived; and modern times have beheld a no less astonishing character in the late usurper of the crown of France, the disturber of the repose of Europe, that troubler of the nations, Napoleon Buonaparte. This extraordinary man first came into public notice at the siege of Toulon, where he acted as an engineer, and in that capacity displayed uncommon ability. By his distinguished military talent, he shortly elevated himself to the rank of Commander in Chief of the French forces; he led forth the most powerful and effective armies to conquest, and was prosecuting his campaign in the East, when English prowess put a check to his daring inroads; and "that General; who had

gained such proud laurels on the continent of Europe, was foiled by a handful of British heroes; and shunk away in disgrace from the shores of Egypt, appalled by the thunder of Nelson, and the splendid glory of Sir Sidney Smith." Mortified, but not depressed; baffled, but not subdued; his enterprising spirit broke forth in the midst of his disgrace, with wonderful energy: he could not return to Paris, as he had formerly done, in the triumphal chariot of the conqueror, crowned with the garland of victory, and decked with the spoils of empires; but in this reverse of fortune, his boundless ambition projected a scheme, calculated, as he thought, to preserve his glory. By the sophistry of his arguments, the interest of his friends in the council, and the support of his adherents, with whom he had long been a popular idol, he procured the annihilation of the then existing government of France, and the formation of a new Constitution, of which he was elected First Consul.

"Ambition's like a circle on the water,
Which never ceases to enlarge itself,
Till by broad spreading it disperse to nought."

No difficulties can damp the powers of exertion, and the ambitious man is ever following some fresh pursuit.

Buonaparté aspired to yet higher honours, and by his great political talents, he was enabled to mount to a dazzling height of splendid dignity, and supreme authority. On the 2d of December, 1804, he was inaugurated on the Imperial throne; and amidst the acclamations of the multitude, was proclaimed Emperor of France; no circumstance was omitted, which could give *éclat* to the ceremony, and the Sovereign Pontiff of the Romish Church was himself present, to assist in the formalities of the coronation. "Thus by the creative genius of one man, after oceans of human blood had been spilt in a contest for a Republican Government, which was more sanguinary and tremendous than any the annals of history record; was the French nation brought back to its ancient form of government, and a new dynasty established in the person of Napoleon, invested with higher rank and greater power, than any of the monarchs of the house of Bourbon."* Napoleon's was a reign of blood: his throne was established by iniquity. Kingdoms crouched beneath his iron sway; nations groaned beneath his despotic rigour; and continental Europe acknowledged the sceptre of his authority. The brilliant scene of his glory was

* Seymour's History of the Wars.

soon to pass away: in 1814, the victorious armies of the Allied Sovereigns wrested from him his honours; his laurels were tarnished; the rod of his dominion was shattered; he was driven from the splendid seat of usurped royalty, and retired to the island of Elba. Here his confinement was of short duration; he speedily burst the trammels which fettered him; and broke forth, like a lion from his den, to revel in other scenes of havoc and bloodshed. The Imperial standard was again erected; the trumpet of war was sounded; and thousands again rallied round his banners. The Herculean might of British prowess was again called in to oppose his pretensions; and on the memorable 18th of June, 1815, he was totally defeated by the valiant troops of Wellington and Blucher, achieving the decisive victory of Waterloo: a victory which has eclipsed the glory of Cressy, Poictiers, and Agincourt.

Thus thwarted in his designs, like Themistocles of old, he surrendered himself into the power of his enemies; and was indebted to the magnanimity of his conquerors, for the preservation of his life as an exile.

This astonishing character was now doomed to feel

the retributive stroke of Divine Providence : he, who for twenty years had agitated the world with political convulsions ; who had abased and exalted kings at his pleasure ; was deported to the barren rock of St. Helena, and there terminated his eventful career.

Here, then, we behold, most strikingly exemplified, the fickleness of popularity, the futility of ambition, the emptiness of all earthly glory. In the lives of the renowned individuals whom we have been contemplating, we perceive, that notwithstanding they reached the most pre-eminent state of worldly advancement—notwithstanding the celebrity of their deeds, which rendered their names famous throughout the world ; they were prematurely hurled from their lofty station ; their end was disappointment ; untimely death, poison, the dungeon, or the dagger was their portion.

Supposing, as in the cases of Mahomet and Cromwell, they are permitted to live out all their days in the guilty possession of their blood-bought honours ; their condition is far from enviable : and the glory of their greatness is a poor compensation for that loss of peace, which they are generally doomed to experience.

Oliver Cromwell, who, by his arts of dissimulation, his pretended religious zeal, and the boldness of his enterprizes, raised himself from an obscure situation to one of important authority; and at length made the scaffold of his monarch his stepping-stone to the throne; realized none of those bright visions, which dazzled his imagination, when he was wielding the sword of rebellion, and aspiring to a seat of unlimited power. The close of his life presents a melancholy picture of the insufficiency of wealth and honour to quiet the remonstrances of conscience, or to calm the tumult of an agitated spirit.

Goldsmith, describing the concluding scenes of his existence, observes:—"All peace was now for ever banished from his mind. He now found that the grandeur to which he had sacrificed his former peace, was only an inlet to fresh inquietudes. The fears of assassination haunted him in all his walks, and were perpetually present to his imagination. He wore armour under his clothes, and always kept pistols in his pockets. His aspect was clouded by a settled gloom, and he regarded every stranger with a glance of timid suspicion. He always travelled with hurry, and was ever attended by a numerous guard. He never returned from any place by

the road he went, and seldom slept above three nights together in the same chamber. Society terrified him, as there he might meet an enemy ; solitude was terrible, as he was there unguarded by every friend."

The characters hitherto noticed, have been those whose ambition prompted them to seek for fame amidst the toils of a military life, the din of camps, the extension of conquest, or the splendour of royalty ; but there are men, who pant for honour and renown amidst the bustle of a court, and in the political cabinet.

Cardinal Wolsey was an eminent instance of the little dependence which is to be placed upon popular favour. Gifted with a commanding genius,

———" a scholar, and a ripe and good one,
Exceeding wise, fair spoken, and persuading :"

by his brilliant talents, he was enabled to elevate himself from a comparatively insignificant station, to stand next to the throne in dignity and honour. Johnson, speaking of his greatness, says—

" In full-blown dignity, see Wolsey stand,
Law in his voice, and fortune in his hand ;

To him, the church, the realm, their pow'rs consign ;
 Through him, the rays of regal bounty shine ;
 Turn'd by his nod, the stream of honour flows,
 His smile alone security bestows :
 Still to new heights, his restless wishes tow'r ;
 Claim leads to claim, and pow'r advances pow'r ;
 Till conquest unresisted ceas'd to please,
 And rights submitted left him none to seize."

Not contented with thus directing the political and ecclesiastical affairs of the English nation, he aspired to even a loftier height, and seemed determined not to rest satisfied, till the Papal tiara was placed upon his brow. Here his ambition "o'erleap'd itself;" the haughtiness of his deportment, and the dazzling magnificence of his princely establishments excited the disgust, and called forth the jealousy of the nobles of Henry's court; and envy, ever eagle-eyed, had long been anxiously watching for an opportunity to humble the arrogance of the upstart, as he was contemptuously denominated. The machinations of his enemies at length succeeded; his double-dealing was made manifest; and retribution followed closely upon this discovery of his duplicity.

He was soon deprived of those regal honours, which had been so lavishly conferred upon him; the smiles of fawning sycophants, and the homage of the people no

longer greeted his public appearance; but the bitter taunts of sarcasm and the sneers of triumphant malice hailed his approach. Having retired to his see of York, he was there arrested, by order of his incensed monarch, upon a charge of high treason ; and was proceeding to London, as a state prisoner, when he halted at Leicester Abbey ; where “broken with the storms of state,” and smarting under the agony of a wounded spirit, he bade an eternal farewell to this transitory scene : with his expiring breath he regretted the folly of his pursuits, and cursed the madness of that ambition, which could lead him, while discharging his duty to the king, and promoting his own temporal advancement, to neglect the glory of his Maker. The bard of Avon has beautifully described his declining power, where he represents Wolsey making use of the following emphatic soliloquy :—

“Farewell! a long farewell to all my greatness!
 This is the state of man; to-day he puts forth
 The tender leaves of hope; to-morrow blossoms,
 And bears his blushing honours thick upon him;
 The third day comes a frost, a killing frost,
 And when he thinks, good, easy man, full surely
 His greatness is a ripening, nips his root;
 And then he falls, as I do. I have ventur’d,
 Like little wanton boys that swim on bladders,
 This many Summers in a sea of glory,
 But far beyond my depth: my high blown pride

At length broke under me ; and now has left me,
 Weary and old with service, to the mercy
 Of a rude stream, that must for ever hide me.
 Vain pomp and glory of the world ! I hate ye.
 I feel my heart new opened : Oh ! how wretched
 Is that poor man, that hangs on princes' favours ;
 There is betwixt that smile we would aspire to,
 That sweet aspect of princes, and their ruin,
 More pangs and fears than wars or women have ;
 And when he falls, he falls like Lucifer,
 Never to hope again."

We see then most distinctly written upon the pages of history, a lamentable comment upon the vanity of ambition ; and yet how many weary themselves in an eager chase of the phantom of glory ; how many there are, of whom it may be literally said in the language of sacred truth, that " they spend their money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which satisfieth not." In the moments of calm reflection (for even the most abandoned must occasionally indulge such reflection) the consideration of the misery which they have wantonly caused, and of the blood which they have unnecessarily shed, must wring their bosoms with unutterable woe, and inflict the most exquisite mental torment. Conscience must be heard ; its gentle whispers may for a time be disregarded ; but it will eventually roar with the

voice of a lion, and distract the soul with the most alarming inquietude. The retrospect of a life thus spent cannot yield substantial peace, or permanent delight ; cannot throw one illuminating ray across the clouded path of adversity, or shed one cheering beam on the dark valley of the shadow of death.

How many of the votaries of fame have failed of obtaining the object of their pursuit, and have been denied even the empty honour of a name in the records of time ! Many, perhaps, warm with hope, and thirsting for renown, have anticipated the achievement of some heroic act which should crown them with immortal honour ; the wreath of glory has encircled their brows ; admiring crowds paid homage ; and the shouts of applauding multitudes proclaimed them as gods among the people : Death, the mighty leveller of human distinctions, has dissipated these visionary prospects ; and the waves of everlasting oblivion have rolled over their unhonoured tombs.

It must not be understood, that the love of glory is here indiscriminately censured ; “ the thirst of fame is

violent ; the desire of honour is powerful ; and he who gave them to us, gave them for great purposes :'* when our exertions are required in the sacred cause of justice ; when our energies are called into action for the good of our country ; ambition becomes a virtue, a spirit of laudable emulation. Restrained within proper bounds, and directed to proper objects, it is an animating principle, which prompts us to the noblest efforts, and incites us to those vigorous attempts, to which the thoughtless and the negligent never aspire.

Leaving the contemplation of the candidate for military or political fame, we sometimes behold an equally ardent aspirant in the literary student ; and surely this is a species of ambition, of which honourable mention may be made ; destruction is not its harbinger ; misery heralds not its approach ; the man of learning acquires not his renown at the expense of a nation's woe, the sighs of the widow, and the tears of the orphan : silently and unostentatiously he pursues his pacific and useful course, in seeking to open new sources of information ; to extend the boundaries of science ; to abolish the reign of igno-

* Economy of Human Life.

rance ; and more effectually to establish the dominion of truth and knowledge.

Men of the brightest genius have, alas ! too frequently prostituted their talents to the cause of irreligion and blasphemy ; the whole artillery of their wit, and the keenest arrows of their satire have been levelled at the most sacred institutions ; the Altar and the Throne have alike been made the objects of their virulent attacks ; and pleased with their own malevolent efforts, they have exulted in the mischief which they have created. Like those conquerors who have gloried in wantonly scattering around them the fire-brands of desolation, they have witnessed, with a kind of diabolical glee, the baneful consequences which have resulted from their perverted endeavours.

When genius puts forth its energies in the cause of virtue and religion ; when it has for its object, the innocent gratification, the information, or the good of society at large ; then it indeed advances high claims upon our respect and admiration ; the bays of the poet are more honourable than the laurels of the warrior : the wreath, which adorned the brow of Virgil, was far more beau-

tiful than the chaplet which bound the temples of Cæsar.

“ Knowledge is power,” says the philosophical Bacon ; a remark, as strictly true in its individual, as in its political application : knowledge gives strength and energy to the mind ; imparts vigour to the understanding ; exalts the character ; ennobles and dignifies the man. Pope Pius the Second observed, “ that men in general should regard learning as silver ; noblemen should value it as gold ; and princes should estimate it as diamonds :” many have found it the highway to honour ; and have been enabled, solely by their mental exertions, to raise themselves from stations of comparative obscurity, to offices of opulence and distinction.

Knowledge can scarcely be too highly rated ; riches may take to themselves wings and fly away ; but the man of learning has a resource of pleasure within himself ; a fountain of delight in his own bosom ; a treasure, of which no earthly power can deprive him. How often have the pursuits of literature and science cheered the dark days of adversity ; imparted consolation amidst the horrors of a prison ; and soothed the miseries of exile !

Dante, Grotius, Tasso, Milton, Bolingbroke, Raleigh, Prior, Cervantes, and many an unfortunate genius have derived a high degree of mental enjoyment, from the exercise of imagination in their favorite studies ; and have thus obtained a temporary suspension of their woes, in the most gloomy seasons of affliction and sorrow.

Honourable as is the ambition which animates the literary aspirant, it is an ambition, which frequently terminates in disappointment, sorrow, and despair. Too often are the children of the Muses destined to tread the rugged path of adversity ; and to drink the bitter dregs of the cup of calamity. Too often has the flower of genius blossomed beneath a frowning sky ; has withered under the chilling blasts of neglect ; has bloomed unnoticed, and perished unregarded.

The fates of Cervantes,* who perished in the streets of Madrid ; of Butler, † who lived in penury, and was interred at the cost of a friend ; of Otway, who, after enduring the severest privations, was choked by a mouthful of bread, with which charity had supplied him,

* Author of *Don Quixote*

† Author of *Hudibras*.

when on the point of starvation ; of Savage, who closed a life of suffering in a prison ; of Chatterton, who committed suicide, under a most complicated pressure of poverty and despair ; are but a few of those mournful instances, which may be gleaned from the biography of men of the brightest talents ; whose works have left to posterity, a striking monument of their genius and erudition.

Montgomery, in his beautiful poem of the Lyre, has admirably depicted the sorrows, with which the sons of genius have frequently to struggle ; and that deep, romantic feeling, which binds them, as with a spell, to the cherished object of their pursuits. An unfortunate child of song is represented as wandering forth, in all “ the mournful resignation of despair ; pale with thought, serenely pale,” he bemoans his desolate condition ; and determines to relinquish his poetic labours. The love of glory fires his soul ; the death defying trumpet summons him to the field of conquest ; and he exults in the anticipation of a hero’s fame ; for a moment, he pauses to reflect upon the desolation which attends the march of the military conqueror :—

"Soft! the blood of murder'd legions
 Summons vengeance from the skies:
 Flaming towns and ravaged regions
 All in awful judgment rise."

His heart sickens at the prospect, and the dazzling visions of honour cease to allure. "Innocently brave," he then resolves to unfurl the sails of commerce; and to bless his paternal soil with the fruits of his merchandise. He hastens to accomplish his purpose, to give "his lyre and sorrow to the wind:" that lyre, which had often solaced him in the night of affliction, and cheered him in the day of mirth, is now suspended on the withered branches of an aged oak: the recollection of the past rushes into the poet's mind; he turns towards the dear companion of his solitary hours, and gazes, like a departing lover, with an eye of lingering, impassioned tenderness upon the beloved object of his affections. The fairy fingers of aerial spirits touch the tuneful strings; celestial harmony floats upon the breeze; the master passion of the bard is powerfully awakened; his dreams of commercial greatness are instantly forgotten; he again seizes his lyre "with all a poet's ecstasy," and pours forth his animated strains with enthusiastic fervour.

" Lyre, O Lyre, my chosen treasure,
 Solace of my bleeding heart !
 Lyre, O Lyre, my only pleasure !
 We will never, never part !
 Glory, Commerce, now in vain,
 Tempt me to the field, the main ;
 The Muses' sons are blest, though born
 To cold neglect, and penury and scorn.

 " What, though all the world neglect me !
 Shall my haughty soul repine ?
 And shall poverty deject me,
 While this hallowed Lyre is mine ?
 Heaven—that o'er my helpless head,
 Many a wrathful vial shed :—
 Heaven gave this Lyre, and thus decreed,
 Be thou a *bruised*, but not a *broken* reed."

Having considered the fruits of military, political, and literary ambition ; upon a calm review of the subject, can any reward, which it holds out to its votaries, compensate for the many sacrifices which are made for its attainment. The hero may succeed in inscribing his name upon the tablets of fame ; the senator may exult in the shouts of popular applause ; and the poet may chant a lofty song, whose sweetness shall delight succeeding generations ; but is there any thing in the anticipation, or the enjoyment of this fancied immortality, that can requite for the toil and anxiety, which are undergone in the endeavour to obtain this trifling pre-eminence among mortals ; any thing that

can be placed in competition with an approving conscience?

“ One self approving hour, whole years outweighs,
Of stupid starers, and of loud huzzas.”

True greatness consists not in that dazzling elevation, which exalts us to a proud distinction among our fellow-men : it consists in a faithful discharge of the duties of our stations, and a proper exercise of those talents, with which we are gifted. When the warrior unsheaths his sword in the cause of liberty, in defence of oppressed humanity, or in opposition to the inroads of invasion ; when the politician acts with a single eye to his country's good ; when the man of learning employs his abilities for the promotion of the public welfare ; their zeal becomes consecrated ; and they richly merit the laurels of fame.

Let it be the ambition of every one to fulfil the duties of his station, in a manner, calculated to adorn the sphere in which he moves ; let his intellectual powers, and his moral influence be exerted in support of virtue and religion ; let piety to God, and benevolence to man be the distinguishing traits of his character ; then, though the diadem of honour may not glitter upon his brow ;

though the plaudits of the people may not greet his public appearance ; the consciousness of a life spent in the sacred exercise of faith and holiness, shall be a reward more valuable than a coronet ; more satisfying than the clamours of the multitude. Time will come, when the world shall lose its fascinations ; when earthly grandeur shall cease to charm ; when the visions of greatness shall no longer delight ; but “ this shall bring a man peace at the last ; ” this shall sustain the soul amidst the agonies of expiring nature ; and shall cheer the departing spirit with the bright hope of a glorious immortality. The memorial of the righteous perishes not with the annals of time ; it is lasting as the joys of heaven ; imperishable as the records of eternity.

“ The paths of glory lead but to the grave ; ”

“ whether there be prophecies, they shall fail ; whether there be tongues, they shall cease ; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away ; ” but the memory of the just shall survive the stroke of death—shall outlive the dissolution of the universe : their names “ shall be had in everlasting remembrance,” when the deeds of the mighty shall be no more celebrated ; when the songs of the poet shall be lost in the silence of oblivion ; and the proud achievements of the hero are eternally forgotten.

HOPE.

Primeval Hope, the Aëonian Muses say,
When Man and Nature mourn'd their first decay;
When every form of death, and every woe,
Shot from malignant stars to earth below;
When Murder bared her arm, and rampant War,
Yoked the red dragons of her iron car,
When Peace and Mercy banish'd from the plain,
Sprung on the viewless winds to Heav'n again;
All, all forsook the friendless guilty mind,
But Hope, the charmer, linger'd still behind.

Campbell.

O! thou, whose hand can pour the heavenly balm
Of consolation in the wounded heart;
Whose eye can dart the glance of holy peace
Amidst the darkest scenes of earthly woe:
Bright messenger of mercy, cheering Hope!
Thy voice inspires delight amidst the storms

Of tribulation :—though the tempest rave,
 And desolation blight the fairest flowers
 Of human happiness : though many a wreck
 Of joy be scatter'd o'er the foaming waves
 Of dark Adversity's tempestuous sea :
 Thy angel form can cheer the lowering gloom ;
 And, 'midst the howling of the blast, thy song
 Be music to the mourner's troubled soul.

Solace of misery ! thou dwellest not
 In heaven's eternal clime ! where seraph bands,
 Beside the streams of everlasting bliss,
 Attune their harps to gladness—Hope is lost
 In full fruition : there the tear is wip'd
 From Sorrow's eye : Affliction sighs no more ;
 But all is transport, happiness, and love.

Thou dwellest not in Hell :—the star of Hope
 Can never pierce the blackness of its caves :
 The fires of vengeance, and the flames of wrath,
 Alone can light the prisons of the damned
 With horrid glare :—despair and agony,
 Throughout eternity, are inmates there.

Thou hast thy habitation, lovely one !
 Among the dwellings of the sons of men.
 Thy sway on earth is mighty : every heart
 Bows, or has bow'd, to thy authority ;
 And though sometimes thy promise be delay'd,
 Till Nature sicken—till the chilling damps
 Of cureless grief oppress the suffering soul ;
 E'en then, thy light will sometimes streak the gloom,
 With all the brightness of the lightning's flash ;
 We gaze upon its glory ; while we gaze,
 'Tis gone :—'twas transient, yet 'twas beautiful.

Amidst a dreary wilderness of woe,
 Enchantress ! thou, with potent charm, canst call
 Spirits of gladness ; at thy nod they come,
 A smiling band : and scenes of beauty rise
 In desert wastes ; thy voice can conjure up
 Visions of light, and loveliness, and joy.

Go, ask the captive, pining in his cell,
 What is it that consoles his bleeding heart,
 And soothes the sadness of his prison hours ?
 With sickly smile, he lifts his faded eye,
 And tells thee, Hope will sometimes bless his cave

With angel visits ; that she sometimes speaks
Of coming liberty, and future peace.

What is it that supports the seaman's soul,
When in the lonesome watches of the night,
He looks on Ocean's watery wilderness,
Thinks on his distant land, his friends, his love ?
Hope treads the billows of the roaring main,
And pointing to his native shores, she tells
Of dangers past ; of joy's triumphant hour ;
Of days of bliss ; of home enjoy'd again.

The soldier in the battle's loud alarms,
When slaughter bathes his sword in human blood,
And havoc revels o'er the gory plain ;
E'en in the tumult, and the deafening noise
Of charging hosts, and cannon's thunder, hears
Hope's gentle whispers promise halcyon days ;
When he, retiring from the din of camps,
To scenes of pleasure, and of calm repose,
Shall wear the laurels gain'd in Glory's field.

The lover, in his waking dreams of bliss,
Sees in the glance of Beauty's speaking eye,

Tenderly eloquent, the beam of Hope,
Which lights his heart with gladness ; every sigh,
That fond affection breathes, he deems the voice
Of love, foretelling years of future joy.

The Poet, in his midnight vigils, hears
Hope's syren song : imagination marks
The pomp which dignifies his honour'd tomb
And views, as through the telescope of time,
Succeeding generations raise the shouts
Of approbation, as his strains are sung.

But ah ! how often, bland deceiver, men
Cling to thy promises, and fondly cling,
Till sad experience wrings the bitter sigh
Of disappointment, o'er each flattering vow,
So often made, so often unfulfilled.
Life is uncertain—earthly joys are vain—
Fame is a bubble—Beauty may deceive :
But there's a hope that faileth not—a hope,
Whose power can soothe Affliction's keenest pangs,
And bring assurance of eternal peace.
Behold, how tranquilly the good man meets
Life's disappointments ; like the flexile reed,

He bows, but falls not 'neath the tempest's wrath.
Hope smiles in every pleasing scene of joy,
Consoles him in the darkest hours of grief;
Yea, when the dews of death fall cold and damp
Upon his fainting brow, Hope takes her stand
Beside the good man's couch, and cheers his soul
With brilliant prospects of immortal bliss.

FINIS.

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